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By Robert Haven Schauffler

THE JOYFUL HEART.
SCUM O' THE EARTH AND OTHER POEMS.
THE MUSICAL AMATEUR.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

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BY

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"People who are nobly happy constitute the power, the beauty and the foundation of the state."

JEAN FINOT: *The Science of Happiness.*

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1914

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Published October 1914

TO
MY WIFE

FOREWORD

THIS is a guide-book to joy. It is for the use of the sad, the bored, the tired, anxious, disheartened and disappointed. It is for the use of all those whose cup of vitality is not brimming over.

The world has not yet seen enough of joy. It bears the reputation of an elusive sprite with finger always at lip bidding farewell. In certain dark periods, especially in times of international warfare, it threatens to vanish altogether from the earth. It is then the first duty of all peaceful folk to find and hold fast to joy, keeping it in trust for their embattled brothers.

Even if this were not their duty as citizens of the world, it would be their duty as patriots. For Jean Finot is right in declaring that "people who are nobly happy constitute the power, the beauty and the foundation of the state."

FOREWORD

This book is a manual of enthusiasm — the power which drives the world — and of those kinds of exuberance (physical, mental and spiritual) which can make every moment of every life worth living. It aims to show how to get the most joy not only from traveling hopefully toward one's goal, but also from the goal itself on arrival there. It urges sound business methods in conducting that supreme business, the investment of one's vitality.

It would show how one may find happiness all alone with his better self, his 'Auto-Comrade' — an accomplishment well-nigh lost in this crowded age. It would show how the gospel of exuberance, by offering the joys of hitherto unsuspected power to the artist and his audience, bids fair to lift the arts again to the lofty level of the Periclean age. It would show the so-called "common" man or woman how to develop that creative sympathy which may make him a 'master by proxy,' and thus let him know the conscious happiness of playing an essential part in the creation of works

of genius. In short, the book tries to show how the cup of joy may not only be kept full for one's personal use, but may also be made hospitably to brim over for others.

To the *Atlantic Monthly* thanks are due for permission to reprint chapters I, III and IV; to the *North American Review*, for chapter VIII; and to the *Century*, for chapters V, VI, IX and X.

R. H. S.

GREENBUSH, MASS.
August, 1914.

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THE JOYFUL HEART

I

A DEFENSE OF JOY

JOY is such stuff as the hinges of Heaven's doors are made of. So our fathers believed. So we supposed in childhood. Since then it has become the literary fashion to oppose this idea. The writers would have us think of joy not as a supernal hinge, but as a pottle of hay, hung by a crafty creator before humanity's asinine nose. The donkey is thus constantly incited to unrewarded efforts. And when he arrives at the journey's end he is either defrauded of the hay outright, or he dislikes it, or it disagrees with him.

Robert Louis Stevenson warns us that "to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive," beautifully portraying the emptiness and illusory character of achievement.

And, of those who have attained, Mr. E. F. Benson exclaims, "God help them!" These sayings are typical of a widespread literary fashion. Now to slander Mistress Joy to-day is a serious matter. For we are coming to realize that she is a far more important person than we had supposed; that she is, in fact, one of the chief managers of life. Instead of doing a modest little business in an obscure suburb, she has offices that embrace the whole first floor of humanity's city hall.

Of course I do not doubt that our writer-friends note down the truth as they see it. But they see it imperfectly. They merely have a corner of one eye on a corner of the truth. Therefore they tell untruths that are the falser for being so charmingly and neatly expressed. What they say about joy being the bribe that achievement offers us to get itself realized may be true in a sense. But they are wrong in speaking of the bribe as if it were an apple rotten at the core, or a bag of counterfeit coin, or a wisp of artificial hay.

It is none of these things. It is sweet and genuine and well worth the necessary effort, once we are in a position to appreciate it at anything like its true worth. We must learn not to trust the beautiful writers too implicitly. For there is no more treacherous guide than the consummate artist on the wrong track.

Those who decry the joy of achievement are like tyros at skating who venture alone upon thin ice, fall down, fall in, and insist on the way home that winter sports have been grossly overestimated. This outcry about men being unable to enjoy what they have attained is a half-truth which cannot skate two consecutive strokes in the right direction without the support of its better half. And its better half is the fact that one may enjoy achievement hugely, provided only he will get himself into proper condition.

Of course I am not for one moment denying that achievement is harder to enjoy than the hope of achievement. Undoubtedly the

former lacks the glamour of the indistinct, "that sweet bloom of all that is far away." But our celebrated writer-friends overlook the fact that glamour and "sweet bloom" are so much pepsin to help weak stomachs digest strong joy. If you would have the best possible time of it in the world, develop your joy-digesting apparatus to the point where it can, without a qualm, dispose of that tough morsel, the present, obvious and attained. There will always be enough of the unachieved at table to furnish balanced rations.

"God help the attainers!" — forsooth! Why, the ideas which I have quoted, if they were carried to logical lengths, would make heaven a farcical kill-joy, a weary, stale, flat, unprofitable morgue of disappointed hopes, with Ennui for janitor. I admit that the old heaven of the Semitic poets was constructed somewhat along these lines. But that was no real heaven. The real heaven is a quiet, harpless, beautiful place where every

one is a heaven-born creator and is engaged — not caring in the least for food or sleep — in turning out, one after another, the greatest of masterpieces, and enjoying them to the quick, both while they are being done and when they are quite achieved.

I would not, however, fall into the opposite error and disparage the joy of traveling hopefully. It is doubtless easy to amuse one's self in a wayside air-castle of an hundred suites, equipped with self-starting servants, a Congressional Library, a National Gallery of pictures, a Vatican-ful of sculpture, with Hoppe for billiard-marker, Paderewski to keep things going in the music-room, Wright as grand hereditary master of the hangar, and Miss Annette Kellerman in charge of the swimming-pool. I am not denying that such a castle is easier to enjoy before the air has been squeezed out of it by the horny clutch of reality, which moves it to the journey's end and sets it down with a jar in its fifty-foot lot, complete with seven rooms and bath,

and only half an hour from the depot. But this is not for one moment admitting the contention of the lords of literature that the air-castle has a monopoly of joy, while the seven rooms and bath have a monopoly of disillusionized boredom and anguish of mind. If your before-mentioned apparatus is only in working order, you can have no end of joy out of the cottage. And any morning before breakfast you can build another, and vastly superior, air-castle on the vacant land behind the woodshed.

"What is all this," I heard the reader ask, "about a joy-digesting apparatus?"

It consists of four parts. Physical exuberance is the first. To a considerable extent joy depends on an overplus of health. The joy of artistic creation, for instance, lies not so intensely and intoxicatingly in what you may some time accomplish as in what has actually just started into life under your pencil or clayey thumb, your bow or brush. For what you are about to receive, the Lord, as

a rule, makes you duly thankful. But with the thankfulness is always mingled the shadowy apprehension that your powers may fail you when next you wish to use them. Thus the joy of anticipatory creation is akin to pain. It holds no such pure bliss as actual creation. When you are in full swing, what you have just finished (unless you are exhausted) seems to you nearly always the best piece of work that you have ever done. For your critical, inhibitory apparatus is temporarily paralyzed by the intoxication of the moment. What makes so many artists fail at these times to enjoy a maximum of pleasure and a minimum of its opposite, is that they do not train their bodies "like a strong man to run a race," and make and keep them aboundingly vital. The actual toil takes so much of their meager vitality that they have too little left with which to enjoy the resulting achievement. If they become ever so slightly intoxicated over the work, they have a dreadful morning after, whose pain they read back into the joy

preceding. And then they groan out that all is vanity, and slander joy by calling it a pottle of hay.

It takes so much vitality to enjoy achievement because achievement is something finished. And you cannot enjoy what is finished in art, for instance, without re-creating it for yourself. But, though re-creation demands almost as much vital overplus as creation, the layman should realize that he has, as a rule, far more of this overplus than the pallid, nervous sort of artist. And he should accordingly discount the other's lamentations over the vanity of human achievement.

The reason why Hazlitt took no pleasure in writing, and in having written, his delicious essays is that he did not know how to take proper care of his body. To be extremely antithetical, I, on the other hand, take so much pleasure in writing and in having written these essays of mine (which are no hundredth part as beautiful, witty, wise, or brilliant as Hazlitt's), that the leaden showers of

drudgery, discouragement, and disillusionment which accompany and follow almost every one of them, and the need of Spartan training for their sake, hardly displace a drop from the bucket of joy that the work brings. Training has meant so much vital overplus to me that I long ago spurted and caught up with my pottle of joy. And, finding that it made a cud of unimagined flavor and durability, I substituted for the pottle a placard to this effect:

REMEMBER THE RACE!

This placard, hung always before me, is a reminder that a decent respect for the laws of good sportsmanship requires one to keep in as hard condition as possible for the hundred-yard dash called Life. Such a regimen pays thousands of per cent. in yearly dividends. It allows one to live in an almost continual state of exaltation rather like that which the sprinter enjoys when, after months of flawless preparation, he hurls himself

through space like some winged creature too much in love with the earth to leave it; while every drop of his tingling blood makes him conscious of endless reserves of vitality.

Tingling blood is a reagent which is apt to transmute all things into joy — even sorrow itself. I wonder if any one seriously doubts that it was just this which was giving Browning's young David such a glorious time of it when he broke into that jubilant war-whoop about "our manhood's prime vigor" and "the wild joys of living."

The physical variety of exuberance, once won, makes easy the winning of the mental variety. This, when it is almost isolated from the other kinds, is what you enjoy when you soar easily along over the world of abstract thought, or drink delight of battle with your intellectual peers, or follow with full understanding the phonographic version of some mighty, four-part fugue. To attain this means work. But if your body is shouting for joy over the mere act of living, mental

calisthenics no longer appear so impossibly irksome. And anyway, the discipline of your physical training has induced your will to put up with a good deal of irksomeness. This is partly because its eye is fixed on something beyond the far-off, divine event of achieving concentration on one subject for five minutes without allowing the mind to wander from it more than twenty-five times. That something is a keenness of perception which makes any given fragment of nature or human nature or art, however seemingly barren and commonplace, endlessly alive with possibilities of joyful discovery — with possibilities, even, of a developing imagination. For the Auto-Comrade, your better self, is a magician. He can get something out of nothing.

At this stage of your development you will probably discover in yourself enough mental adroitness and power of concentration to enable you to weed discordant thoughts out of the mind. As you wander through your mental pleasure-grounds, whenever you come

upon an ugly intruder of a thought which might bloom into some poisonous emotion such as fear, envy, hate, remorse, anger, and the like, there is only one right way to treat it. Pull it up like a weed; drop it on the rubbish heap as if it were a stinging nettle; and let some harmonious thought grow in its place. There is no more reckless consumer of all kinds of exuberance than the discordant thought, and weeding it out saves such an amazing quantity of *eau de vie* wherewith to water the garden of joy, that every man may thus be his own Burbank and accomplish marvels of mental horticulture.

When you have won physical and mental exuberance, you will have pleased your Auto-Comrade to such an extent that he will most likely startle and delight you with a birthday present as the reward of virtue. Some fine morning you will climb out of the right side of your bed and come whistling down to breakfast and find by your plate a neat packet of spiritual exuberance with his best

wishes. Such a gift is what the true artist enjoys when inspiration comes too fast and full for a dozen pens or brushes to record. Jeanne d'Arc knew it when the mysterious voices spoke to her; and St. John on Patmos; and every true lover at certain moments; and each one of us who has ever flung wide the gates of prayer and felt the infinite come flooding in as the clean vigor of the tide swirls up through a sour, stagnant marsh; or who at some supreme instant has felt enfolding him, like the everlasting arms, a sure conviction of immortality.

Now for purposes of convenience we may speak of these three kinds of exuberance as we would speak of different individuals. But in reality they hardly ever exist alone. The physical variety is almost sure to induce the mental and spiritual varieties and to project itself into them. The mental kind looks before and after and warms body and soul with its radiant smile. And even when we are in the throes of a purely spiritual love or religious

ecstasy, we have a feeling — though perhaps it is illusory — that the flesh and the intellect are more potent than we knew.

These, then, constitute the first three parts of the joy-digesting apparatus. I think there is no need of dwelling on their efficacy in helping one to enjoy achievement. Let us pass, therefore, to the fourth and last part, which is self-restraint.

Perhaps the worst charge usually made against achievement is its sameness, its dry monotony. On the way to it (the writers say) you are constantly falling in with something new. But, once there, you must abandon the variegated delights of yesterday and settle down, to-day and forever, to the same old thing. In this connection I recall an epigram of Professor Woodrow Wilson's. He was lecturing to us young Princetonians about Gladstone's ability to make any subject of absorbing interest, even a four hours' speech on the budget. "Young gentlemen," cried the professor, "it is not the subject that is

dry. It is *you* that are dry!" Similarly, it is not achievement that is dry; it is the achievers, who fondly suppose that now, having achieved, they have no further use for the exuberance of body, mind, and spirit, or the self-restraint which helped them toward their goal.

Particularly the self-restraint. One chief reason why the thing attained palls so often and so quickly is that men seek to enjoy it immoderately. Why, if Ponce de Leon had found the fountain of youth and drunk of it as bibulously as we are apt to guzzle the cup of achievement, he would not only have arrested the forward march of time, but would have over-reached himself and slipped backward through the years of his age to become a chronic infant in arms. Even traveling hopefully would pall if one kept at it twenty-four hours a day. Just feast on the rich food of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony morning, noon, and night for a few months, and see how you feel. There is no other way. Achievement

must be moderately indulged in, not made the pretext for a debauch. If one has achieved a new cottage, for example, let him take numerous week-end vacations from it. And let not an author sit down and read through his own book the moment it comes from the binder. A few more months will suffice to blur the memory of those irrevocable, nauseating foundry proofs. If he forbears — instead of being sickened by the stuff, no gentle reader, I venture to predict, will be more keenly and delicately intrigued by the volume's vigors and subtleties.

If you have recently made a fortune, be sure, in the course of your Continental wanderings, to take many a third-class carriage full of witty peasants, and stop at many an "unpretending" inn "Of the White Hind," with bowered rose-garden and bowling-green running down to the trout-filled river, and mine ample hostess herself to make and bring you the dish for which she is famous over half the countryside. Thus you will increase by

at least one Baedekerian star-power the luster of the next Grand Hotel Royal de l'Univers which may receive you. And be sure to alternate pedestrianism with motoring, and the "peanut" gallery with the stage-box. Omit not to punctuate with stag vacations long periods of domestic felicity. When Solomon declared that all was vanity and vexation of spirit I suspect that he had been more than unusually intemperate in frequenting the hymeneal altar.

Why is it that the young painters, musicians, and playwrights who win fame and fortune as heroes in the novels of Mr. E. F. Benson enjoy achievement so hugely? Simply because they are exuberant in mind, body, and spirit, and, if not averse to brandy and soda, are in other ways, at least, paragons of moderation. And yet, in his "Book of Months," Mr. Benson requests God to help those who have attained!

With this fourfold equipment of the three exuberances and moderation, I defy Solomon

himself in all his glory not to enjoy the situation immensely and settle down in high good humor and content with the paltry few scores of wives already achieved. I defy him not to enjoy even his fame.

We have heard much from the gloomily illustrious about the fraudulent promise of fame. At a distance, they admit, it seems like a banquet board spread with a most toothsome feast. But step up to the table. All you find there is dust and ashes, vanity and vexation of spirit and a desiccated joint that defies the stoutest carver. If a man holds this view, however, you may be rather sure that he belongs to the *bourgeois* great. For it is just as *bourgeois* to win fame and then not know what on earth to do with it, as it is to win fortune and then not know what on earth to do with it. The more cultivated a famous man is, the more he must enjoy the situation; for along with his dry scrag of fame, the more he must have of the sauce which alone makes it palatable. The

recipe for this sauce runs as follows: to one amphoraful best physical exuberance add spice of keen perception, cream of imagination, and fruits of the spirit. Serve with grain of salt.

That famous person is sauceless who can, without a tingle of joy, overhear the couple in the next steamer-chairs mentioning his name casually to each other as an accepted and honored household word. He has no sauce for his scrag if he, unmoved, can see the face of some beautiful child in the holiday crowd suddenly illuminated by the pleasure of recognizing him, from his pictures, as the author of her favorite story. He is *bourgeois* if it gives him no joy when the weight of his name swings the beam toward the good cause; or when the mail brings luminous gratitude and comprehension from the perfect stranger in Topeka or Tokyo. No; fame to the truly cultivated should be fully as enjoyable as traveling hopefully toward fame.

In certain other cases, indeed, attainment is even more delicious than the hope thereof. Think of the long, cool drink at the New Mexican pueblo after a day in the incandescent desert, with your tongue gradually enlarging itself from thirst. How is it with you, O golfer, when, even up at the eighteenth, you top into the hazard, make a desperate demonstration with the niblick, and wipe the sand out of your eyes barely in time to see your ball creep across the distant green and drop into the hole? Has not the new president's aged father a slightly better time at the inauguration of his dear boy than he had at any time during the fifty years of hoping for and predicting that consummation? Does not the successful altruist enjoy more keenly the certainty of having made the world a better place to live in, than he had enjoyed the hope of achieving that desirable end? Can there be any comparison between the joys of the tempest-driven soul aspiring, now hopefully, now despairingly, to port,

and the joys of the same soul which has at last found a perfect haven in the heart of God?

And still the writers go on talking of joy as if it were a pottle of hay — a flimsy fraud — and of the satisfaction of attainment as if it were unattainable. Why do they not realize, at least, that their every thrill of response to a beautiful melody, their every laugh of delighted comprehension of Hazlitt or Crothers, is in itself attainment? The creative appreciator of art is always at his goal. And the much-maligned present is the only time at our disposal in which to enjoy the much-advertised future.

Too bad that our literary friends should have gone to extremes on this point! If Robert Louis Stevenson had noted that "to travel hopefully is an easier thing than to arrive," he would undoubtedly have hit the truth. If Mr. Benson had said, "If you attain, God help you bountifully to exuberance," etc., that would have been unexceptionable.

It would even have been a more useful — though slightly supererogatory — service, to point out for the million-and-first time that achievement is not all that it seems to be from a considerable distance. In other words, that the laws of perspective will not budge. These writers would thus quite sufficiently have played dentist to Disappointment and extracted his venomous fangs for us in advance. What the gentlemen really should have done was to perform the dentistry first, reminding us once again that a part of attainment is illusory and consists of such stuff as dreams — good and bad — are made of. Then, on the other hand, they should have demonstrated attainment's good points, finally leading up to its supreme advantage. This advantage is — its strategic position.

Arriving beats hoping to arrive, in this: that while the hoper is so keenly hopeful that he has little attention to spare for anything besides the future, the arriver may take a broader, more leisurely survey of things.

The hoper's eyes are glued to the distant peak. The attainer of that peak may recover his breath and enjoy a complete panorama of his present achievement and may amuse himself moreover by re-climbing the mountain in retrospect. He has also yonder farther and loftier peak in his eye, which he may now look forward to attacking the week after next; for this little preliminary jaunt is giving him his mountain legs. Hence, while the hoper enjoys only the future, the achiever, if his joy-digesting apparatus be working properly, rejoices with exceeding great joy in past, present, and future alike. He has an advantage of three to one over the merely hopeful traveler. And when they meet this is the song he sings: —

Mistress Joy is at your side
Waiting to become a bride.

Soft! Restrain your jubilation.
That ripe mouth may not be kissed
Ere you stand examination.
Mistress Joy 's a eugenist.

THE JOYFUL HEART

Is your crony Moderation?
Do your senses say you sooth?
Are your veins the kind that tingle?
Is your soul awake in truth?

If these traits in you commingle
Joy no more shall leave you single.

II

THE BRIMMING CUP

EXUBERANCE is the income yielded by a wise investment of one's vitality. On this income, so long as it flows in regularly, the moderate man may live in the Land of the Joyful Heart, incased in triple steel against any arrows of outrageous fortune that happen to stray in across the frontier. Immigrants to this land who have no such income are denied admission. They may steam into the country's principal port, past the great statue of the goddess Joy who holds aloft a brimming cup in the act of pledging the world. But they are put ashore upon a small island for inspection. And so soon as the inferior character of their investments becomes known, or their recklessness in eating into their principal, they are deported.

The contrast between those within the well-

guarded gates and those without is an affecting one. The latter often squander vast fortunes in futile attempts to gain a foothold in the country. And they have a miserable time of it. Many of the natives, on the other hand, are so poor that they have constantly to fight down the temptation to touch their principal. But every time they resist, the old miracle happens for them once more: the sheer act of living turns out to be "paradise enow."

Now no mere fullness of life will qualify a man for admission to the Land of the Joyful Heart. One must have overflowingness of life. In his book "The Science of Happiness" Jean Finot declares, that the "disenchantment and the sadness which degenerate into a sort of pessimistic melancholy are frequently due to the diminution of the vital energy. And as pain and sorrow mark the diminution, the joy of living and the upspringing of happiness signify the increase of energy. . . . By using special instruments, such as the plethysmo-

graph of Hallion, the pneumograph of Marey, the sphygmometer of Cheron, and so many others which have come in fashion during these latter years, we have succeeded in proving experimentally that joy, sadness, and pain depend upon our energy." To keep exuberant one must possess more than just enough vitality to fill the cup of the present. There must be enough to make it brim over. Real exuberance, however, is not the extravagant, jarring sort of thing that some thoughtless persons suppose it to be. The word is not accented on the first syllable. Indeed, it might just as well be "*in*uberance." It does not long to make an impression or, in vulgar phrase, to "get a rise"; but tends to be self-contained. It is not boisterousness. It is generous and infectious, while boisterousness is inclined to be selfish and repellent. Most of us would rather spend a week among a crowd of mummies than in a gang of boisterous young blades. For boisterousness is only a degenerate exuberance, drunk and on the

rampage. The royal old musician and poet was not filled with this, but with the real thing, when he sang:

> "He leadeth me beside the still waters.
> He restoreth my soul . . .
> My cup runneth over."

The merely boisterous man, on the other hand, is a fatuous spendthrift of his fortune. He reminds us how close we are of kin to the frolicsome chimpanzee. His attitude was expressed on election night by a young man of Manhattan who shouted hoarsely to his fellow:

> "On with the dance; let joy be unrefined!"

Neither should mere vivacity be mistaken for exuberance. It is no more surely indicative of the latter than is the laugh of a parrot. One of the chief advantages of the Teutonic over the Latin type of man is that the Latin is tempted to waste his precious vital overplus through a continuous display of vivacity, while the less demonstrative Teuton more easily

stores his up for use where it will count. This gives him an advantage in such pursuits as athletics and empire-building.

The more exuberance of all varieties one has stored up in body and mind and spirit, the more of it one can bring to bear at the right moment upon the things that count for most in the world — the things that owe to it their lasting worth and their very existence. A little of this precious commodity, more or less, is what often makes the difference between the ordinary and the supreme achievement. It is the liquid explosive that shatters the final, and most stubborn, barrier between man and the Infinite. It is what Walt Whitman called "that last spark, that sharp flash of power, that something or other more which gives life to all great literature."

The happy man is the one who possesses these three kinds of overplus, and whose will is powerful enough to keep them all healthy and to keep him from indulging in their delights intemperately.

It is a ridiculous fallacy to assume, as many do, that such fullness of life is an attribute of youth alone and slips out of the back door when middle age knocks at the front. It is no more bound to go as the wrinkles and gray hairs arrive than your income is bound to take wings two or three score years after the original investment of the principal. To ascribe it to youth as an exclusive attribute is as fatuous as it would be to ascribe a respectable income only to the recent investor.

A red-letter day it will be for us when we realize that exuberance represents for every one the income from his fund of vitality; that when one's exuberance is all gone, his income is temporarily exhausted; and that he cannot go on living at the same rate without touching the principal. The hard-headed, harder-worked American business man is admittedly clever and prudent about money matters. But when he comes to deal with immensely more important matters such as

life, health, and joy, he often needs a guardian. He has not yet grasped the obvious truth that a man's fund of vitality ought to be administered upon at least as sound a business basis as his fund of dollars. The principal should not be broken into for living expenses during a term of at least ninety-nine years. (Metchnikoff says that this term is one hundred and twenty or so if you drink enough of the Bulgarian bacillus.) And one should not be content with anything short of a substantial rate of interest.

In one respect this life-business is a simpler thing to manage than the dollar-business. For, in the former, if the interest comes in regularly and unimpaired, you may know that the principal is safe, while in the dollar-business they may be paying your interest out of your principal, and you none the wiser until the crash. But here the difference ceases. For if little or no vital interest comes in, your generous scale of living is pinched. You may defer the catastrophe a little by

borrowing short-time loans at a ruinous rate from usurious stimulants, giving many pounds of flesh as security. But soon Shylock forecloses and you are forced to move with your sufferings to the slums and ten-cent lodging-houses of Life. Moreover, you must face a brutal dispossession from even the poor flat or dormitory cot you there occupy — out amid the snows and blasts —

"Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form"

there to pay slack life's "arrears of pain, darkness, and cold."

The reason why every day is a joy to the normal child is that he fell heir at birth to a fortune of vitality and has not yet had time to squander all his substance in riotous or thoughtless living, or to overdraw his account in the Bank of Heaven on Earth. Every one of his days is a joy — that is, except in so far as his elders have impressed their tired standards of behavior too masterfully upon him. "Happy as a child" — the commonness of the

phrase is in itself a commentary. In order to remain as happy as this for a century or so, all that a child has to do is to invest his vitality on sound business principles, and never overdraw or borrow. I shall not here go into the myriad details of just how to invest and administer one's vitality. For there is no dearth of wise books and physicians and "Masters of the Inn," competent to mark out sound business programs of work, exercise, recreation, and regimen for body, mind, and spirit; while all that you must contribute to the enterprise is the requisite comprehension, time, money, and will-power. You see, I am not a professor of vital commerce and investment; I am a stump-speaker, trying to induce the voters to elect a sound business administration.

I believe that the blessings of climate give us of North America less excuse than most other people for failing to put such an administration into office. It is noteworthy that many of the Europeans who have recently written

their impressions of the United States imagine that Colonel Roosevelt's brimming cup of vitality is shared by nearly the whole nation. If it only were! But the fact that these observers think so would seem to confirm our belief that our own cup brims over more plentifully than that of Europe. This is probably due to the exhilarating climate which makes America — physically, at least, though not yet economically and socially — the promised land.

Of course I realize the absurdity of urging the great majority of human beings to keep within their vital incomes. To ask the overworked, under-fed, under-rested, under-played, shoddily dressed, over-crowded masses of humanity why they are not exuberant, is to ask again, with Marie Antoinette, why the people who are starving for bread do not eat cake. The fact is that to keep within one's income to-day, either financially or vitally, is an aristocratic luxury that is absolutely denied to the many. Most men — the rich

as well as the poor—stumble through life three parts dead. The ruling class, if it had the will and the skill, might awaken itself to fullness of life. But only a comparatively few of the others could, because the world is conducted on a principle which makes it even less possible for them to store up a little hoard of vitality in their bodies against a rainy day than to store up an overplus of dollars in the savings bank.

I think that this state of things is very different from the one which the fathers contemplated in founding our nation. When they undertook to secure for us all "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," they did not mean a bare clinging to existence, liberty to starve, and the pursuit of a nimble happiness by the lame, the halt, and the blind. They meant fullness of life, liberty in the broadest sense, both outer and inner, and that almost certain success in the attainment of happiness which these two guarantee a man. In a word, the fathers meant to offer us

all a good long draft of the brimming cup with the full sum of benefits implied by that privilege. For the vitalized man possesses real life and liberty, and finds happiness usually at his disposal without putting himself to the trouble of pursuit.

I can imagine the good fathers' chagrin if they are aware to-day of how things have gone on in their republic. Perhaps they realize that the possibility of exuberance has now become a special privilege. And if they are still as wise as they once were, they will be doubly exasperated by this state of affairs because they will see that it is needless. It has been proved over and over again that modern machinery has removed all real necessity for poverty and overwork. There is enough to go 'round. Under a more democratic system we might have enough of the necessities and reasonable comforts of life to supply each of the hundred million Americans, if every man did no more than a wholesome amount of productive labor in a day and had

the rest of his time for constructive leisure and real living.

On the same terms there is likewise enough exuberance to go 'round. The only obstacle to placing it within the reach of all exists in men's minds. Men are still too inert and blindly conservative to stand up together and decree that industry shall be no longer conducted for the inordinate profit of the few, but for the use of the many. Until that day comes, the possibility of exuberance will remain a special privilege.

In the mean while it is too bad that the favored classes do not make more use of this privilege. It is absurd that such large numbers of them are still as far from exuberance as the unprivileged. They keep reducing their overplus of vitality to an *under-minus* of it by too much work and too foolish play, by plain thinking and high living and the dissipation of maintaining a pace too swift for their as yet unadjusted organisms. They keep their house of life always a little chilly by

opening the windows before the furnace has had a chance to take the chill out of the rooms.

If we would bring joy to the masses why not first vitalize the classes? If the latter can be led to develop a fondness for that brimming cup which is theirs for the asking, a long step will be taken toward the possibility of overflowing life for all. The classes will come to realize that, even from a selfish point of view, democracy is desirable; that because man is a social animal, the best-being of the one is inseparable from the best-being of the many; that no one can be perfectly exuberant until all are exuberant. Jean Finot is right: "True happiness is so much the greater and deeper in the proportion that it embraces and unites in a fraternal chain more men, more countries, more worlds."

But the classes may also be moved by instincts less selfish. For the brimming cup has this at least in common with the cup that inebriates: its possessor is usually filled with a

generous — if sometimes maudlin — anxiety to have others enjoy his own form of beverage. The present writer is a case in point. His reason for making this book lay in a convivial desire to share with as many as possible the contents of a newly acquired brimming cup. Before getting hold of this cup, the writer would have looked with an indifferent and perhaps hostile eye upon the proposition to make such a blessing generally available. But now he cannot for the life of him see how any one whose body, mind, and spirit are alive and reasonably healthy can help wishing the same jolly good fortune for all mankind.

Horace Traubel records that the aged Walt Whitman was once talking philosophy with some of his friends when an intensely bored youngster slid down from his high chair and remarked to nobody in particular: "There's too much old folk here for me!"

"For me, too," cried the poet with one of his hearty laughs. "We are all of us a good

deal older than we need to be, than we think we are. Let's all get young again."

Even so! Here's to eternal youth for every one. And here's to the hour when we may catch the eye of humanity and pledge all brother men in the brimming cup.

III

ENTHUSIASM

ENTHUSIASM is exuberance-with-a-motive. It is the power that makes the world go 'round. The old Greeks who christened it knew that it was the god-energy in the human machine. Without its driving force nothing worth doing has ever been done. It is man's dearest possession. Love, friendship, religion, altruism, devotion to hobby or career — all these, and most of the other good things in life, are forms of enthusiasm. A medicine for the most diverse ills, it alleviates both the pains of poverty and the boredom of riches. Apart from it man's heart is seldom joyful. Therefore it should be husbanded with zeal and spent with wisdom.

To waste it is folly; to misuse it, disaster. For it is safe to utilize this god-energy only in its own proper sphere. Enthusiasm moves

the human vessel. To let it move the rudder, too, is criminal negligence. Brahms once made a remark somewhat to this effect: The reason why there is so much bad music in the world is that composers are in too much of a hurry. When an inspiration comes to them, what do they do? Instead of taking it out for a long, cool walk, they sit down at once to work it up, but let it work *them* up instead into an absolutely uncritical enthusiasm in which every splutter of the goose-quill looks to them like part of a swan-song.

Love is blind, they say. This is an exaggeration. But it is based on the fact that enthusiasm, whether it appears as love, or in any other form, always has trouble with its eyes. In its own place it is incomparably efficient; only keep it away from the pilot-house!

Since this god-energy is the most precious and important thing that we have, why should our word for its possessor have sunk almost to the level of a contemptuous epithet?

Nine times in ten we apply it to the man who allows his enthusiasm to steer his vessel. It would be full as logical to employ the word "writer" for one who misuses his literary gift in writing dishonest advertisements. When we speak of an "enthusiast" to-day, we usually mean a person who has all the ill-judging impulsiveness of a child without its compensating charm, and is therefore not to be taken seriously. "He 's only an enthusiast!" This has been said about Columbus and Christ and every other great man who ever lived.

But besides its poor sense of distance and direction, men have another complaint against enthusiasm. They think it insincere on account of its capacity for frequent and violent fluctuation in temperature. In his "Creative Evolution," Bergson shows how "our most ardent enthusiasm, as soon as it is externalized into action, is so naturally congealed into the cold calculation of interest or vanity, the one so easily takes the shape of

the other, that we might confuse them together, doubt our own sincerity, deny goodness and love, if we did not know that the dead retain for a time the features of the living."

The philosopher then goes on to show how, when we fall into this confusion, we are unjust to enthusiasm, which is the materialization of the invisible breath of life itself. It is "the spirit." The action it induces is "the letter." These constitute two different and often antagonistic movements. The letter kills the spirit. But when this occurs we are apt to mistake the slayer for the slain and impute to the ardent spirit all the cold vices of its murderer. Hence, the taint of insincerity that seems to hang about enthusiasm is, after all, nothing but illusion. To be just we should discount this illusion in advance as the wise man discounts discouragement. And the epithet for the man whose lungs are large with the breath of life should cease to be a term of reproach.

ENTHUSIASM

Enthusiasm is the prevailing characteristic of the child and of the adult who does memorable things. The two are near of kin and bear a family resemblance. Youth trails clouds of glory. Glory often trails clouds of youth. Usually the eternal man is the eternal boy; and the more of a boy he is, the more of a man. The most conventional-seeming great men possess as a rule a secret vein of eternal-boyishness. Our idea of Brahms, for example, is of a person hopelessly mature and respectable. But we open Kalbeck's new biography and discover him climbing a tree to conduct his chorus while swaying upon a branch; or, in his fat forties, playing at frog-catching like a five-year-old.

The prominent American is no less youthful. Not long ago one of our good gray men of letters was among his children, awaiting dinner and his wife. Her footsteps sounded on the stairs. "Quick, children!" he exclaimed. "Here's mother. Let's hide under the table and when she comes in we'll rush

out on all-fours and pretend we're bears." The maneuver was executed with spirit. At the preconcerted signal, out they all waddled and galumphed with horrid grunts — only to find something unfamiliar about mother's skirt, and, glancing up, to discover that it hung upon a strange and terrified guest.

The biographers have paid too little attention to the god-energy of their heroes. I think that it should be one of the crowning achievements of biography to communicate to the reader certain actual vibrations of the enthusiasm that filled the scientist or philosopher for truth; the patriot for his country; the artist for beauty and self-expression; the altruist for humanity; the discoverer for knowledge; the lover or friend for a kindred soul; the prophet, martyr, or saint for his god.

Every lover, according to Emerson, is a poet. Not only is this true, but every one of us, when in the sway of any enthusiasm, has in him something creative. Therefore a

record of the most ordinary person's enthusiasms should prove as well worth reading as the ordinary record we have of the extraordinary person's life if written with the usual neglect of this important subject. Now I should like to try the experiment of sketching in outline a new kind of biography. It would consist entirely of the record of an ordinary person's enthusiasms. But, as I know no other life-story so well as my own, perhaps the reader will pardon me for abiding in the first person singular. He may grant pardon the more readily if he realizes the universality of this offense among writers. For it is a fact that almost all novels, stories, poems, and essays are only more or less cleverly disguised autobiography. So here follow some of my enthusiasms in a new chapter.

IV

A CHAPTER OF ENTHUSIASMS

I

IN looking back over my own life, a series of enthusiasms would appear to stand out as a sort of spinal system, about which are grouped as tributaries all the dry bones and other minor phenomena of existence. Or, rather, enthusiasm is the deep, clear, sparkling stream which carries along and solves and neutralizes, if not sweetens, in its impetuous flow life's rubbish and superfluities of all kinds, such as school, the Puritan Sabbath, boot and hair-brushing, polite and unpolemic converse with bores, prigs, pedants, and shorter catechists — and so on all the way down between the shores of age to the higher mathematics, bank failures, and the occasional editor whose word is not as good as his bond.

A CHAPTER OF ENTHUSIASMS

My first enthusiasm was for good things to eat. It was stimulated by that priceless asset, a virginal palate. But here at once the medium of expression fails. For what may words presume to do with the flavor of that first dish of oatmeal; with the first pear, grape, watermelon; with the Bohemian roll called *Hooska*, besprinkled with poppy and mandragora; or the wondrous dishes which our Viennese cook called *Aepfelstrudel* and *Scheiterhaufen?* The best way for me to express my reaction to each of these delicacies would be to play it on the 'cello. The next best would be to declare that they tasted somewhat better than Eve thought the apple was going to taste. But how absurdly inadequate this sounds! I suppose the truth is that such enthusiasms have become too utterly congealed in our *blasé* minds when at last these minds have grown mature enough to grasp the principles of penmanship. So that whatever has been recorded about the sensations of extreme youth is probably all false. Why, even

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy," —

as Wordsworth revealed in his "Ode on Immortality." And though Tennyson pointed out that we try to revenge ourselves by lying about heaven in our maturity, this does not serve to correct a single one of crabbed age's misapprehensions about youth.

Games next inflamed my fancy. More than dominoes or Halma, lead soldiers appealed to me, and tops, marbles, and battledore and shuttlecock. Through tag, fire-engine, pom-pom-pull-away, hide-and-seek, baseball, and boxing, I came to tennis, which I knew instinctively was to be my athletic *grand passion.* Perhaps I was first attracted by the game's constant humor which was forever making the ball imitate or caricature humanity, or beguiling the players to act like solemn automata. For children are usually quicker than grown-ups to see these droll resemblances. I came by degrees to like the game's variety, its tense excitement, its beauty

of posture and curve. And before long I vaguely felt what I later learned consciously: that tennis is a sure revealer of character. Three sets with a man suffice to give one a working knowledge of his moral equipment; six, of his chief mental traits; and a dozen, of that most important, and usually veiled part of him, his subconscious personality. Young people of opposite sexes are sometimes counseled to take a long railway journey together before deciding on a matrimonial merger. But I would respectfully advise them rather to play "singles" with each other before venturing upon a continuous game of doubles.

The collecting mania appeared some time before tennis. I first collected ferns under a crag in a deep glen. Mere amassing soon gave way to discrimination, which led to picking out a favorite fern. This was chosen, I now realize, with a woeful lack of fine feeling. I called it "The Alligator" from its fancied resemblance to my brother's alli-

gator-skin traveling-bag. But admiration of this fern brought a dawning consciousness that certain natural objects were preferable to others. This led, in years, to an enthusiasm for collecting impressions of the beauty, strength, sympathy, and significance of nature. The Alligator fern, as I still call it, has become a symbolic thing to me; and the sight of it now stands for my supreme or best-loved impression, not alone in the world of ferns, but also in each department of nature. Among forests it symbolizes the immemorial incense cedars and redwoods of the Yosemite; among shores, those of Capri and Monterey; among mountains, the glowing one called Isis as seen at dawn from the depths of the Grand Cañon.

II

Next, I collected postage-stamps. I know that it is customary to-day for writers to sneer at this pursuit. But surely they have forgotten its variety and subtlety; its demand

on the imagination; how it makes history and geography live, and initiates one painlessly into the mysteries of the currency of all nations. Then what a tonic it is for the memory! Only think of the implications of the annual price-catalogue! Soon after the issue of this work, every collector worthy the name has almost unconsciously filed away in his mind the current market values of thousands of stamps. And he can tell you offhand, not only their worth in the normal perforated and canceled condition, but also how their values vary if they are uncanceled, unperforated, embossed, rouletted, surcharged with all manner of initials, printed by mistake with the king standing on his head, or water-marked anything from a horn of plenty to the seven lean kine of Egypt. This feat of memory is, moreover, no hardship at all, for the enthusiasm of the normal stamp-collector is so potent that its proprietor has only to stand by and let it do all the work.

We often hear that the wealthy do not enjoy their possessions. This depends entirely upon the wealthy. That some of them enjoy their treasures giddily, madly, my own experience proves. For, as youthful stamp-collectors went in those days, I was a philatelic magnate. By inheritance, by the ceaseless and passionate trading of duplicates, by rummaging in every available attic, by correspondence with a wide circle of foreign missionaries, and by delivering up my whole allowance, to the dealers, I had amassed a collection of several thousand varieties. Among these were such gems as all of the triangular Cape of Good Hopes, almost all of the early Persians, and our own spectacular issue of 1869 unused, including the one on which the silk-stockinged fathers are signing the Declaration of Independence. Such possessions as these I well-nigh worshiped.

Even to-day, after having collected no stamps for a generation, the chance sight of

an "approval sheet," with its paper-hinged reminders of every land, gives me a curious sensation. There visit my spine echoes of the thrills that used to course it on similar occasions in boyhood. These were the days when my stamps had formed for me mental pictures — more or less accurate — of each country from Angola to Zululand, its history, climate, scenery, inhabitants, and rulers. To possess its rarest stamp was mysteriously connected in my mind with being given the freedom of the land itself, and introduced with warm recommendations to its *genius loci.*

Even old circulars issued by dealers, now long gone to stampless climes, have power still to raise the ghost of the vanished glamour. I prefer those of foreign dealers because their English has the quaint, other-world atmosphere of what they dealt in. The other day I found in an old scrapbook a circular from Vienna, which annihilated a score of years with its very first words:

CLEARING

OF A LARGE PART OF MY RETAIL DEPOSITORY

Being lately so much engaged into my wholesale business . . . I have made up my mind to sell out a large post of my retail-stamps at underprices. They are rests of larger collections containing for the most, only older marks and not thrash possibly put together purposedly as they used to be composed by the other dealers and containing therefore mostly but worthless and useless nouveautés of Central America.

Before continuing this persuasive flow, the dealer inserts a number of testimonials like the following. He calls them:

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sent package having surpassed my expertations I beg to remit by to days post-office-ordres Mk. 100. Kindly please send me by return of post offered album wanted for retail sale.

G. B — HANNOVER.

The dealer now comes to his peroration:

I beg to call the kind of attention of every buyer to the fact of my selling all these packages and albums with my own loss merely for clearings

sake of my retail business and in order to get rid of them as much and as soon as possible. With 25–60 % abatement I give stamps and whole things to societies against four weeks calculation.

All collectors are bound to oblige themselves by writing contemporaneously with sending in the depository amount to make calculation within a week as latest term.

It is enough! As I read, the old magic enfolds me, and I am seized with longing to turn myself into a society of collectors and to implore the altruistic dealer "kindly please" to send me, at a prodigious "abatement," "stamps and whole things against four weeks calculation."

III

The youngest children of large families are apt to be lonely folk, somewhat retired and individualistic in their enthusiasms. I was such a child, blessed by circumstances with few playfellows and rather inclined to sedentary joys. Even when I reached the barbaric stage of evolution where youth is gripped by enthusiasm for the main pursuits

of his primitive ancestors, I was fain to enjoy these in the more sophisticated forms natural to a lonely young city-dweller.

When stamps had passed their zenith I was filled with a lust for slaughter. Fish were at first the desired victims. Day after day I sat watching a hopelessly buoyant cork refuse to bob into the depths of the muddy and torpid Cuyahoga. I was like some fond parent, hoping against hope to see his child outlive the flippant period and dive beneath the surface of things, into touch with the great living realities. And when the cork finally marked a historic epoch by vanishing, and a small, inert, and intensely bored sucker was pulled in hand over hand, I felt thrills of gratified longing and conquest old and strong as the race.

But presently I myself was drawn, like the cork, beneath the superficial surface of the angler's art. For in the public library I chanced on a shelf of books, that told about fishing of a nobler, jollier, more seductive

sort. At once I was consumed with a passion for five-ounce split-bamboo fly-rods, ethereal leaders, double-tapered casting-lines of braided silk, and artificial flies more fair than birds of paradise. Armed in spirit, with all these, I waded the streams of England with kindly old Isaak Walton, and ranged the Restigouche with the predecessors of Henry van Dyke. These dreams brought with them a certain amount of satisfaction — about as much satisfaction as if they had come as guests to a surprise party, each equipped with a small sandwich and a large appetite. The visions were pleasant, of course, but they cried out, and made me cry out, for action. There were no trout, to be sure, within a hundred miles, and there was no way of getting to any trouty realm of delight. But I did what I could to be prepared for the blessed hour when we should meet. I secured five new subscriptions or so to "The Boys' Chronicle" (let us call it), and received in return a fly-rod so flimsy that it would have resolved itself

into its elements at sight of a half-pound trout. It was destined, though, never to meet with this embarrassment.

My casting-line bore a family resemblance to grocery string. My leader was a piece of gut from my brother's 'cello; my flybook, an old wallet. As for flies, they seemed beyond my means; and it was perplexing to know what to do, until I found a book which said that it was better by far to tie your own flies. With joyful relief I acted on this counsel. Plucking the feather-duster, I tied two White Millers with shoe-thread upon cod-hooks. One of these I stained and streaked with my heart's blood into the semblance of a Parmacheene Belle. The canary furnished materials for a Yellow May; a dooryard English sparrow, for a Brown Hackle. My masterpiece, the beautiful, parti-colored fly known as Jock Scott, owed its being to my sister's Easter bonnet.

I covered the points of the hooks with pieces of cork, and fished on the front lawn

from morning to night, leaning with difficulty against the thrust of an imaginary torrent. And I never ceased striving to make the three flies straighten out properly as the books directed, and fall like thistledown upon the strategic spot where the empty tomato can was anchored, and then jiggle appetizingly down over the four-pounder, where he sulked in the deep hole just beyond the hydrant.

The hunting fever was wakened by the need for the Brown Hackle already mentioned. But as the choice of weapons and of victims culminated in the air-gun and the sparrow, respectively, my earliest hunting was confined even more closely than my fishing to the library and the dense and teeming forests of the imagination.

But while somewhat handicapped here by the scarcity of ferocious game, I was more fortunate in another enthusiasm which attacked me at almost the same time. For however unpropitious the hunting is on any

given part of the earth's surface, there is everywhere and always an abundance of good hidden-treasure-seeking to be had. The garden, the attic, the tennis lawn all suffered. And my initiative was strengthened by the discovery of an incomparable book all about a dead man's chest, and not only digging for gold in a secret island, but finding it, too, by jingo! and fighting off the mutineers.

These aspirations naturally led to games of Pirate, or Outlaw, which were handicapped, however, by the scarcity of playmates, and their curious hesitation to serve as victims. As pirates and outlaws are well known to be the most superstitious of creatures, inclining to the primitive in their religious views, we were naturally led into a sort of dread enthusiasm for — or enthusiastic dread of — the whole pantheon of spooks, sprites, and bugaboos to which savages and children, great and small, bow the knee. My dreams at that time ran something like this:

PARADISE REVISED

Playing hymn-tunes day and night
On a harp *may* be all right
For the grown-ups; but for me,
I do wish that heaven could be
Sort o' like a circus, run
So a kid could have some fun!

There I 'd not play harps, but horns
When I chased the unicorns —
Magic tubes with pistons greasy,
Slides that pushed and pulled out easy,
Cylinders of snaky brass
Where the fingers like to fuss,
Polished like a looking-glass,
Ending in a blunderbuss.

I would ride a horse of steel
Wound up with a ratchet-wheel.
Every beast I 'd put to rout
Like the man I read about.
I would singe the leopard's hair,
Stalk the vampire and the adder,
Drive the werewolf from his lair,
Make the mad gorilla madder.
Needle-guns my work should do.
But, if beasts got closer to,
I would pierce them to the marrow
With a barbed and poisoned arrow,
Or I 'd whack 'em on the skull
Till my scimiter was dull.

If these weapons did n't work,
With a kris or bowie-knife,
Poniard, assegai, or dirk,
I would make them beg for life; —
Spare them, though, if they 'd be good
And guard me from what haunts the wood —
From those creepy, shuddery sights
That come round a fellow nights —
Imps that squeak and trolls that prowl,
Ghouls, the slimy devil-fowl,
Headless goblins with lassoes,
Scarlet witches worse than those,
Flying dragon-fish that bellow
So as most to scare a fellow. . . . .

There, as nearly as I could,
I would live like Robin Hood,
Taking down the mean and haughty,
Getting plunder from the naughty
To reward all honest men
Who should seek my outlaw's den.

When I 'd wearied of these pleasures
I 'd go hunt for hidden treasures —
In no ordinary way,
Pirates' luggers I 'd waylay;
Board them from my sinking dory,
Wade through decks of gore and glory,
Drive the fiends, with blazing matchlock,
Down below, and snap the hatch-lock.

Next, I 'd scud beneath the sky-land,
Sight the hills of Treasure Island,

Prowl and peer and prod and prise,
Till there burst upon my eyes
Just the proper pirate's freight:
Gold doubloons and pieces of eight!

Then — the very best of all —
Suddenly a stranger tall
Would appear, and I 'd forget
That we hadn't ever met.
And with cap upthrown I 'd greet him
(Turning from the plunder, yellow)
And I'd hurry fast to meet him,
For he'd be the very fellow
Who, I think, invented fun —
Robert Louis Stevenson.

The enthusiasms of this barbaric period never died. They grew up, instead, and proved serviceable friends. Fishing and hunting are now the high-lights of vacation time. The crude call of the weird and the inexplicable has modulated into a siren note from the forgotten psychic continents which we Western peoples have only just discovered and begun to explore. As for the buried treasure craze — why, my life-work practically amounts to a daily search for hidden valuables in the cellars and attics, the

chimney-pieces and desert islands of the mind, and secret attempts to coin them into currency.

And so I might go on to tell of my enthusiasms for no end of other things like reading, modeling, folk-lore, cathedrals, writing, pictures, and the theater. Then there is the long story of that enthusiasm called Love, of Friendship its twin, and their elder brother, Religion, and their younger sister, Altruism. And travel and adventure and so on. But no! It is, I believe, a misdemeanor to obtain attention under false pretenses. If I have caught the reader's eye by promising to illustrate in outline a new method of writing autobiography, I must not abuse his confidence by putting that method into practice. So, with a regret almost equal to that of Lewis Carroll's famous Bellman —

I skip twenty years —

and close with my latest enthusiasm.

IV

Confirmed wanderers that we were, my wife and I had rented a house for the winter in a Massachusetts coast village and had fallen somewhat under the spell of the place. Nevertheless, we had decided to move on soon — to try, in fact, another trip through Italy. Our friendly neighbors urged us to buy land up the "back lane" instead, and build and settle down. We knew nothing of this region, however, and scarcely heard them.

But they were so insistent that one day we ventured up the back lane at dusk and began to explore the woods. It grew dark and we thought of turning back. Then it began to grow light again. A full moon was climbing up through the maples, inviting further explorations. We pushed through a dense undergrowth and presently were in a grove of great white pines. There was a faint sound of running water, and suddenly we came upon an astonishing brook — wide, swift, and musical.

We had not suspected the existence of such a brook within a dozen leagues. It was overarched by tall oaks and elms, beeches, tupelos, and maples. The moonbeams were dancing in the ripples and on the floating castles of foam.

"What a place for a study!"

"Yes; a log cabin with a big stone fireplace."

The remarks came idly, but our eyes met and held. Moved by one impulse we turned from the stream and remarked what bosh people will sometimes talk, and discussed the coming Italian trip as we moved cautiously among the briers. But when we came once more to the veteran pines, they seemed more glamorous than ever in the moonlight, especially one that stood near a large holly, apart from the rest — a three-prong lyrical fellow — and his opposite, a burly, thickset archer, bending his long-bow into a most exquisite curve. The fragrant pine needles whispered. The brook lent its faint music.

"Quick! We had better get away!"

A forgotten lumber road led us safe from briers up a hill. Out of a dense oak grove we suddenly emerged upon the more open crest. Our feet sank deep in moss.

"Look," I said.

Over the heads of the high forest trees below shimmered a mile of moonlit marshes, and beyond them a gleam — perhaps from some vessel far at sea, perhaps even from a Provincetown lighthouse.

"Yes, but look!"

At a touch I faced around and beheld, crowning the hill, a stately company of red cedars, comely and dense and mysterious as the cypresses of Tivoli, and gloriously drenched in moonlight.

"But what a place for a house!"

"Let's give up Italy," was the answer, "and make this wood our home."

By instinct and training we were two inveterate wanderers. Never had we possessed so much as a shingle or a spoonful of earth. But the nest-building enthusiasm had us at

last. Our hands met in compact. As we strolled reluctantly homeward to a ten-o'clock dinner we talked of road-making, swamps, pneumatic water-systems, the nimbleness of dollars, and mountains of other difficulties. And we agreed that the only kind of faith which can easily remove mountains is the faith of the enthusiast.

V

THE AUTO-COMRADE

HUMAN nature abhors a vacuum, especially a vacuum inside itself. Offer the ordinary man a week's vacation all alone, and he will look as though you were offering him a cell in Sing Sing.

"There are," as Ruth Cameron truly observes, "a great many people to whom there is no prospect more terrifying than that of a few hours with only their own selves for company. To escape that terrible catastrophe, they will make friends with the most fearful bore or read the most stupid story. . . . If such people are marooned a few hours, not only without human companionship, but even without a book or magazine with which to screen their own stupidity from themselves, they are fairly frantic."

If any one hates to be alone with himself,

the chances are that he has not much of any self to be alone with. He is in as desolate a condition as a certain Mr. Pease of Oberlin, who, having lost his wife and children, set up his own tombstone and chiseled upon it this epitaph:

"Here lies the pod.
The Pease are shelled and gone to God."

Now, pod-like people such as he are always solitary wherever other people are not; and there is, of course, nothing much more distressing than solitariness. These people, however, fall through sheer ignorance into a confusion of thought. They suppose that solitude and solitariness are the same thing. To the artist in life — to the wise keeper of the joyful heart — there is just one difference between these two: it is the difference between heaven and its antipodes. For, to the artist in life, solitude is solitariness plus the Auto-Comrade.

As it is the Auto-Comrade who makes all the difference, I shall try to describe his

appearance. His eyes are the most arresting part of him. They never peer stupidly through great, thick spectacles of others' making. They are scarcely ever closed in sleep, and sometimes make their happiest discoveries during the small hours. These hours are truly small because the Auto-Comrade often turns his eyes into the lenses of a moving-picture machine — such an entertaining one that it compresses the hours to seconds. It is through constant, alert use that his eyes have become sharp. They can pierce through the rinds of the toughest personalities, and even penetrate on occasion into the future. They can also take in whole panoramas of the past in one sweeping look. For they are of that "inner" variety through which Wordsworth, winter after winter, used to survey his daffodil-fields. "The bliss of solitude," he called them.

The Auto-Comrade has an adjustable brow. It can be raised high enough to hold and reverberate and add rich overtones to, the

grandest chords of thought ever struck by a Plato, a Buddha, or a Kant. The next instant it may easily be lowered to the point where the ordinary cartoon of commerce or the tiny cachinnation of a machine-made Chesterton paradox will not ring entirely hollow. As for his voice, it can at times be more musical than Melba's or Caruso's. Without being raised above a whisper, it can girdle the globe. It can barely breathe some delicious new melody; yet the thing will float forth not only undiminished, but gathering beauty, significance, and incisiveness in every land it passes through.

The Auto-Comrade is an erect, wiry young figure of an athlete. As he trades at the Seven-League Boot and Shoe Concern, it never bothers him to accompany you on the longest tramps. His feet simply cannot be tired out. As for his hands, they are always alert to give you a lift up the rough places on the mountain-side. He has remarkable presence of body. In any emergency he is usually

the best man on the spot. He is at once seer, creator, accomplisher, and present help in time of trouble. But his everyday occupation is that of entertainer. He is the joy-bringer — the Prometheus of pleasure. In his vicinity there is no such thing as ennui or lonesomeness. Emerson wrote:

> "When I would spend a lonely day
> Sun and moon are in my way."

But for pals of the Auto-Comrade, not only sun, moon, etc., are in the way, but all of his own unlimited resources. For every time and season he has a fittingly varied repertory of entertainment.

Now and again he startles you by the legerdemain feat of snatching brand-new ideas out of the blue, like rabbits out of a hat. While you stand at the port-hole of your cabin and watch the rollers rushing back to the beloved home-land you are quitting, he marshals your friends and acquaintances into a long line for a word of greeting or a rapid-

fire chat, just as though you were some idol of the people, and were steaming in past the Statue of Liberty on your way home from lionizing and being lionized abroad, and the Auto-Comrade were the factotum at your elbow who asks, "What name, please?"

After the friends and acquaintances, he even brings up your *bêtes noires* and dearest enemies for inspection and comment. Strangely enough, viewed in this way, these persons no longer seem so contemptible or pernicious or devilish as they once did. At this point your factotum rubs your eye-glasses bright with the handkerchief he always carries about for slate-cleaning purposes, and lo! you even begin to discover good points about the chaps, hitherto unsuspected.

Then there are always your million-and-one favorite melodies which nobody but that all-around musical amateur, the Auto-Comrade, can so exquisitely whistle, hum, strum, fiddle, blat, or roar. There is also a universeful of new ones for him to improvise. And he is the

jolliest sort of fellow musician, because, when you play or sing a duet with him, you can combine with the exciting give-and-take and reciprocal stimulation of the duet, the god-like autocracy of the solo, its opportunity for wide, uninterrupted, uncoerced self-expression. Sometimes, however, in the first flush of escape with him to the wilds, you are fain to clap your hand over his mouth in order the better to taste the essentially folk-less savor of solitude. For music is a curiously social art, and Browning was more than half right when he said, "Who hears music, feels his solitude peopled at once."

Perhaps you can find your entertainer a small lump of clay or modeling-wax to thumb into bad caricatures of those you love and good ones of those you hate, until increasing facility impels him to try and model not a Tanagra figurine, for that would be unlike his original fancy, but a Hoboken figurine, say, or a sketch for some Elgin (Illinois) marbles.

If you care anything for poetry and can find him a stub of pencil and an unoccupied cuff, he will be most completely in his element; for if there is any one occupation more closely identified with him than another, it is that of poet. And though all Auto-Comrades are not poets, all poets are Auto-Comrades. Every poem which has ever thrilled this world or another has been written by the Auto-Comrade of some so-called poet. This is one reason why the so-called poets think so much of their great companions. "Allons! after the great companions!" cried old Walt to his fellow poets. If he had not overtaken, and held fast to, his, we should never have heard the "Leaves of Grass" whispering "one or two indicative words for the future." The bards have always obeyed this call. And they have known how to value their Auto-Comrades, too. See, for example, what Keats thought of his:

Though the most beautiful Creature were waiting for me at the end of a Journey or a Walk;

though the Carpet were of Silk, the Curtains of the morning Clouds; the chairs and Sofa stuffed with Cygnet's down; the food Manna, the Wine beyond Claret, the Window opening on Winander mere, I should not feel — or rather my Happiness would not be so fine, as my Solitude is sublime. Then instead of what I have described, there is a sublimity to welcome me home — The roaring of the wind is my wife and the Stars through the window pane are my Children. . . . I feel more and more every day, as my imagination strengthens, that I do not live in this world alone but in a thousand worlds — No sooner am I alone than shapes of epic greatness are stationed around me, and serve my Spirit the office which is equivalent to a King's body-guard. . . . I live more out of England than in it. The Mountains of Tartary are a favorite lounge, if I happen to miss the Alleghany ridge, or have no whim for Savoy.

This last sentence not only reveals the fact that the Auto-Comrade, equipped as he is with a wishing-mat, is the very best cicerone in the world, but also that he is the ideal tramping companion. Suppose you are mountain-climbing. As you start up into "nature's observatory," he kneels in the dust and fastens wings upon your feet. He conveniently

adjusts a microscope to your hat-brim, and hangs about your neck an excellent telescope. He has enough sense, too, to keep his mouth closed. For, like Hazlitt, he "can see no wit in walking and talking." The joy of existence, you find, rarely tastes more cool and sweet and sparkling than when you and your Auto-Comrade make a picnic thus, swinging in a basket between you a real, live thought for lunch. On such a day you come to believe that Keats, on another occasion, must have had his own Auto-Comrade in mind when he remarked to his friend Solitude that

> ". . . it sure must be
> Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
> When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee."

The Auto-Comrade can sit down with you in thick weather on a barren lighthouse rock and give you a breathless day by hanging upon the walls of fog the mellow screeds of old philosophies, and causing to march and countermarch over against them the scarlet and purple pageants of history. Hour by

hour, too, he will linger with you in the metropolis, that breeder of the densest solitudes — in market or terminal, subway, court-room, library, or lobby — and hour by hour unlock you those chained books of the soul to which the human countenance offers the master key.

Something of a sportsman, too, is the Auto-Comrade. He it is who makes the fabulously low score at golf — the kind of score, by the way, that is almost invariably born to blush unseen. And he will uncomplainingly, even zestfully, fish from dawn to dusk in a solitude so complete that there is not even a fin to break it. But if there are fish, he finds them. He knows how to make the flies float indefinitely forward through yonder narrow opening, and drop, as light as thistledown, in the center of the temptingly inaccessible pool. He knows without looking, exactly how thick and how prehensile are the bushes and branches that lie in wait for the back cast, and he can calculate to a grain how much

urging the reactionary three-pounder and the blest tie that binds him to the four-ounce rod will stand.

He is one of the handiest possible persons to have along in the woods. When you take him on a canoe trip with others, and the party comes to "white water," he turns out to be a dead shot at rapid-shooting. He is sure to know what to do at the supreme moment when you jam your setting-pole immutably between two rocks and, with the alternative of taking a bath, are forced to let go and grab your paddle; and are then hung up on a slightly submerged rock at the head of the chief rapid just in time to see the rest of the party disappear majestically around the lower bend. At such a time, simply look to the Auto-Comrade. He will carry you through. Also there is no one like him at the moment when, having felled your moose, leaned your rifle against a tree, and bent down the better to examine him, the creature suddenly comes to life.

In tennis, when you wake up to find that your racket has just smashed a lob on the bounce from near the back-net, scoring a clean ace between your paralyzed opponents, you ought to know that the racket was guided by that superior sportsman; and if you are truly modest, you will admit that your miraculous stop wherewith the team whisked the baseball championship out of the fire in the fourteenth inning was due to his unaided efforts.

There are other games about which he is not so keen: solitaire, for instance. For solitaire is a social game that soon loses its zest if there be not some devoted friend or relative sitting by and simulating that pleasureable absorption in the performance which you yourself only wish that you could feel.

This great companion can keep you from being lonely even in a crowd. But there is a certain kind of crowd that he cannot abide. Beware how you try to keep him in a crowd of unadulterated human porcupines! You know how the philosopher Schopenhauer once

likened average humanity to a herd of porcupines on a cold day, who crowd stupidly together for warmth, prick one another with their quills, are mutually repelled, forget the incident, grow cold again, and repeat the whole thing *ad infinitum*.

In other words, the human porcupine is the person considered at the beginning of this one-sided discussion who, to escape the terrible catastrophe of confronting his own inner vacuum, will make friends with the most hideous bore. This creature, however, is much more rare than the misanthropic Schopenhauer imagined. It takes a long time to find one among such folk as lumbermen, gypsies, shirt-waist operatives, fishermen, masons, trappers, sailors, tramps, and teamsters. If the sour philosopher had only had the pleasure of knowing those teamsters who sent him into paroxysms of rage by cracking their whips in the alley, I am sure that he would never have spoken as harshly of their minds as he did. The fact is that porcupines

are not extremely common among the very "common" people. It may be that there is something stupefying about the airs which the upper classes, the best people, breathe and put on, but the social climber is apt to find the human porcupine in increasing herds as he scales the heights. This curious fact would seem incidentally to show that our misanthropic philosopher must have moved exclusively in the best circles.

Now, if there is one thing above all others that the Auto-Comrade cannot away with, it is the flaccid, indolent, stodgy brain of the porcupine. If people have let their minds slump down into porcupinishness, or have never taken the trouble to rescue them from that ignominious condition — well, the Auto-Comrade is no snob; when all's said, he is a rather democratic sort of chap. But he has to draw the line somewhere, you know, and he really must beg to be excused from rubbing shoulders with such intellectual rabble, for instance, as blocks upper Fifth Avenue on

Sunday noons. He prefers instead the rabble which, on all other noons of the week, blocks the lower end of that variegated thoroughfare.

Such exclusiveness lays the Auto-Comrade open, of course, to the charge of inhospitality. But "is not he hospitable," asks Thoreau, "who entertains good thoughts?" Personally, I think he is. And I believe that this sort of hospitality does more to make the world worth living in than much conventional hugging to your bosom of porcupines whose language you do not speak, yet with whom it is embarrassing to keep silence.

If the Auto-Comrade mislikes the porcupine, however, the feeling is returned with exorbitant interest. The alleged failings of auto-comradeship have always drawn grins, jokes, fleers, and nudges, from the auto-comradeless. It is time the latter should know that the joke is really on him; for he is the most forlorn of mankind. The other is never at a loss. He is invulnerable, being

one whom "destiny may not surprise nor death dismay." But the porcupine is liable at any moment to be deserted by associates who are bored by his sharp, hollow quills. He finds himself the victim of a paradox which decrees that the hermit shall "find his crowds in solitude" and never be alone; but that the flocker shall every now and then be cast into inner darkness, where shall be "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The laugh is on the porcupine; but the laugh turns almost into a tear when one stops to realize the nature of his plight. Why, the poor wretch is actually obliged to be near someone else in order to enjoy a sense of vitality! In other words, he needs somebody else to do his living for him. He is a vicarious citizen of the world, holding his franchise only by courtesy of Tom, Dick, and Harry. All the same, it is rather hard to pity him very profoundly while he continues to feel quite as contemptuously superior as he usually does. For, the contempt of the average

porcupine for pals of the Auto-Comrade is akin to the contempt which the knights of chivalry felt for those paltry beings who were called clerks because they possessed the queer, unfashionable accomplishment of being able to read and write.

I remember that the loudest laugh achieved by a certain class-day orator at college came when he related how the literary guy and the tennis-player were walking one day in the woods, and the literary guy suddenly exclaimed: "Ah, leave me, Louis! I would be alone." Even apart from the stilted language in which the orator clothed the thought of the literary guy, there is, to the porcupine, something irresistibly comic in such a situation. It is to him as though the literary guy had stepped up to the nearest policeman and begged for the room at Sing Sing already referred to.

Indeed, the modern porcupine is as suspicious of pals of the Auto-Comrade as the porcupines of the past were of sorcerers and

witches — folk, by the way, who probably consorted with spirits no more malign than Auto-Comrades. "What," asked the porcupines of one another, "can they be doing, all alone there in those solitary huts? What honest man would live like that? Ah, they must be up to no good. They must be hand in glove with the Evil One. Well, then, away with them to the stake and the river!"

As a matter of fact, it probably was not the Evil One that these poor folk were consorting with, but the Good One. For what is a man's Auto-Comrade, anyway, but his own soul, or the same thing by what other name soever he likes to call it, with which he divides the practical, conscious part of his brain, turn and turn about, share and share alike? And what is a man's own soul but a small stream of the infinite, eternal water of life? And what is heaven but a vast harbor where myriad streams of soul flow down, returning at last to their Source in the bliss of perfect reunion? I believe that many a Salem witch

was dragged to her death from sanctuary; for church is not exclusively connected with stained glass and collection-baskets. Church is also wherever you and your Auto-Comrade can elude the starched throng and fall together, if only for a moment, on your knees.

The Auto-Comrade has much to gain by contrast with one's flesh-and-blood associates, especially if this contrast is suddenly brought home to one after a too long separation from him. I shall never forget the thrill that was mine early one morning after two months of close, uninterrupted communion with one of my best and dearest friends. At the very instant when the turn of the road cut off that friend's departing hand-wave, I was aware of a welcoming, almost boisterous shout from the hills of dream, and turning quickly, beheld my long-lost Auto-Comrade rushing eagerly down the slopes toward me.

Few joys may compare with the joy of such a sudden unexpected reunion. It is like "the shadow of a mighty rock within a weary

land." No, this simile is too disloyal to my friend. Well, then, it is like a beaker full of the warm South when you are leaving a good beer country and are trying to reconcile yourself to ditch-water for the next few weeks. At any rate, similes or not, there were we two together again at last. What a week of weeks we spent, pacing back and forth on the veranda of our log cabin, where we overlooked the pleasant sinuosities of the Sebois and gazed out together over golden beech and ghostly birch and blood-red maple banners to the far violet mountains of the Aroostook! And how we did take stock of the immediate past, chuckling to find that it had not been a quarter so bad as I had stupidly supposed. What gilded forest trails were those which we blazed into the glamorous land of to-morrow! And every other moment these recreative labors would be interrupted while I pressed between the pages of a notebook some butterfly or sunset leaf or quadruply fortunate clover which my Auto-Com-

rade found and turned over to me. (Between two of those pages, by the way, I afterwards found the argument of this chapter.)

Then, when the effervescence of our meeting had lost a little of its first, fine, carbonated sting, what Elysian hours we did spend over the correspondence of those other two friends, Goethe and Schiller! Passage after passage we would turn back to re-read and muse over. These we would discuss without any of the rancor or dogmatic insistence or one-eyed stubbornness that usually accompany the clash of mental steel on mental steel from a different mill. And without making any one else lose the thread or grow short-breathed or accuse us passionately of reading ahead, we would, on the slightest provocation, out-Fletcher Fletcher chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy. And we would underline and bracket and side-line and overline the ragged little paper volume, and scribble up and down its margins, and dream over its footnotes, to our hearts' content.

Such experiences, though, are all too rare with me. Why? Because my Auto-Comrade is a rather particular person and will not associate with me unless I toe his mark.

"Come," I propose to him, "let us go a journey."

"Hold hard," says he, and looks me over appraisingly. "You know the rule of the Auto-Comrades' Union. We are supposed to associate with none but fairly able persons. Are you a fairly able person?"

If it turns out that I am not, he goes on a rampage, and begins to talk like an athletic trainer. The first thing he demands is that his would-be associate shall keep on hand a jolly good store of surplus vitality. You are expected to supply exuberance to him somewhat as you supply gasolene to your motor. Now, of course, there are in the world not a few invalids and other persons of low physical vitality whose Auto-Comrades happen to have sufficient gasolene to keep them both running, if only on short rations. Most of

these cases, however, are pathological. They have hot-boxes at both ends of the machine, and their progress is destined all too soon to cease and determine disastrously. The rest of these cases are the rare exceptions which prove the rule. For unexuberant yet unpathological pals of the Auto-Comrade are as rare as harmonious households in which the efforts of a devoted and blissful wife support an able-bodied husband.

The rule is that you have got to earn exuberance for two. "Learn to eat balanced rations right," thunders the Auto-Comrade, laying down the law; "exercise, perspire, breathe, bathe, sleep out of doors, and sleep enough; rule your liver with a rod of iron, don't take drugs or nervines, cure sickness beforehand, keep love in your heart, do an adult's work in the world, have at least as much fun as you ought to have."

"That," he goes on, "is the way to develop enough physical overplus so that you will be enabled to overcome your present sad addic-

tion to mob-intoxication. And, provided your mind is not in as bad condition as your body, this physical overplus will transmute some of itself into mental exuberance. This will enable you to have more fun with your mind than an enthusiastic kitten has with its tail. It will enable you to look before and after, and purr over what is, as well as to discern, with pleasurable longing, what is not, and set forth confidently to capture it."

But if, by any chance, you have allowed your mind to get into the sort of condition which the old-fashioned German scholar used to allow his body to get into, it develops that the Auto-Comrade hates a flabby brain almost as much as he hates a flabby body. He soon makes it clear that he will not have much to do with any one who has not yet mastered the vigorous and highly complex art of not worrying. Also, he demands of his companion the knack of calm, consecutive thought. This is one reason why so many more Auto-Comrades are to be found in crow's-nests,

gypsy-vans, and shirt-waist factories than on upper Fifth Avenue. For, watching the stars and the sea from a swaying masthead, taking light-heartedly to the open road, or even operating a rather unwholesome sewing-machine all day in silence, is better for consecutiveness of mind than a never-ending round of offices, clubs, committees, servants, dinners, teas, and receptions, to each of which one is a little late.

In diffusing knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, this knack of concentration, Arnold Bennett's little books on mental efficiency have done wonders for the art of auto-comradeship. Their popular persuasiveness has coaxed thousands on thousands of us to go in for a few minutes' worth of mental calisthenics every day. They have actually cajoled us into the painful feat of glancing over a page of a book and then putting it down and trying to retrace the argument in memory. Or they have coaxed us to fix on some subject — any subject — for reflection,

and then scourge our straying minds back to it at every few steps of the walk to the morning train. And we have found that the mental muscles have responded at once to this treatment. They have hardened under the exercise until being left alone has begun to change from confinement in the same cell with that worst of enemies who has the right to forge one's own name—into a joyful pleasure jaunt with a totally different person who, if not one's best friend, is at least to be counted on as a trusty, entertaining, resourceful, unselfish associate — at times, perhaps, a little exacting — yet certainly a far more brilliant and generally satisfactory person than his companion.

No matter what the ignorant or the envious may say, there is nothing really unsocial in a moderate indulgence in the art of auto-comradeship. A few weeks of it bring you back with a fresher, keener appreciation of your other friends and of humanity in general than you had before setting forth. In the

continuous performance of the psalm of life such contrasts as this of solos and choruses have a reciprocal advantage.

But auto-comradeship must not be overdone, as it was overdone by the mediæval monks. Its delights are too delicious, its particular vintage of the wine of experience too rich, for long-continued consumption. Consecutive thought, though it is one of man's greatest pleasures, is at the same time perhaps the most arduous labor that he can perform. And after a long period of it, both the Auto-Comrade and his companion become exhausted and, perforce, less comradely.

Besides the incidental exhaustion, there is another reason why this beatific association must have its time-limit; for, unfortunately, one's Auto-Comrade is always of the same sex as one's self, and in youth, at least, if the presence of the complementary part of creation is long denied, there comes a time when this denial surges higher and higher in subconsciousness, then breaks into consciousness,

and keeps on surging until it deluges all the tranquillities, zests, surprises, and excitements of auto-comradeship, and makes them of no effect.

This is, probably, a wise provision for the salvation of the human digestion. For otherwise, many a man, having tasted of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of auto-comradeship, might thereupon be tempted to retire to his hermit's den hard by and endeavor to sustain himself for life on this food alone.

Most of us, however, long before such extremes have been reached, are sure to rush back to our kind for the simple reason that we are enjoying auto-comradeship so much that we want someone else to enjoy it with.

VI

VIM AND VISION

EFFICIENCY is to-day the Hallelujah Chorus of industry. I know a manufacturer who recently read a book on business management. Stop-watch in hand he then made an exhaustive study of his office force and their every action. After considering the tabulated results he arose, smashed all but one of the many office mirrors, bought modern typewriters, and otherwise eliminated works of supererogation. The sequel is that a dozen stenographers to-day perform the work of the former thirty-two.

This sort of thing is spreading through the business world and beyond it in every direction. Even the artists are studying the bearing of industrial efficiency on the arts of sculpture, music, literature, architecture, and painting. But beyond the card catalogue and the

filing cabinet the artists find that this new gospel has little to offer them. Their sympathies go out, instead, to a different kind of efficiency. The kind that bids fair to shatter their old lives to bits and re-mold them nearer to the heart's desire is not industrial but human. For inspiration it goes back of the age of Brandeis to the age of Pericles.

The enthusiasm for human efficiency is beginning to rival that for industrial efficiency. Preventive medicine, public playgrounds, the new health education, school hygiene, city planning, eugenics, housing reform, the child-welfare and country-life movements, the cult of exercise and sport — these all are helping to lower the death-rate and enrich the life-rate the world over. Health has fought with smoke and germs and is now in the air. It would be strange if the receptive nature of the artist should escape the benignant infection.

There is an excellent reason why human

efficiency should appeal less to the industrial than to the artistic worlds. Industry has a new supply of human machines always available. Their initial cost is nothing. So it pays to overwork them, scrap them promptly, and install fresh ones. Thus it comes that the costly spinning machines in the Southern mills are exquisitely cared for, while the cheap little boys and girls who tie the broken threads are made to last an average four or five years. In art it is different. The artist knows that he is, like Swinburne's Hertha, at once the machine and the machinist. It is dawning upon him that one chief reason why the old Greeks scaled Parnassus so efficiently is that all the master-climbers got, and kept, their human machines in good order for the climb. They trained for the event as an Olympic athlete trains to-day for the Marathon. One other reason why there was so much record-breaking in ancient Greece is that the non-artists trained also, and thus, through their heightened sympathy and appre-

ciation of the master-climbers, became masters by proxy. But that is another chapter.

Why has art never again reached the Periclean plane? Chiefly because the artist broke training when Greece declined, and has never since then brought his body up to the former level of efficiency.

Now, as the physiological psychologists assure us, the artist needs a generous overplus of physical vitality. The art-impulse is a brimming-over of the cups of mental and spiritual exuberance. And the best way to insure this mental and spiritual overplus is to gain the physical. The artist's first duty is to make his body as vim-full as possible. He will soon find that he is greater than he knows. He will discover that he has, until then, been walking the earth more than half a corpse. With joy he will come to see that living in a glow of health bears the same relation to merely not being sick that a plunge in the cold salt surf bears to using a tepid wash-rag in a hall bedroom.

"All through the life of a feeble-bodied man, his path is lined with memory's grave-stones which mark the spots where noble enterprises perished for lack of physical vigor to embody them in deeds." Thus wrote the educator, Horace Mann. And his words apply with special force to the worker in the arts. One should bear in mind that the latter is in a peculiar dilemma. His nerve-racking, confining, exhausting work always tends to enfeeble and derange his body. But the claims of the work are so exacting that it is no use for him to spare intensity. Unless he is doing his utmost he had better be doing nothing at all. And to do his utmost he must keep his body in that supremely fit condition which the work itself is always tending to destroy. The one lasting solution is for him to reduce his working time to a safe maximum and increase his recreation and sleeping-time to a safe minimum, and to train "without haste, without rest."

"The first requisite to great intellectuality

in a man is to be a good animal," says Maxim the inventor. Hamerton, in his best-known book, offers convincing proof that overflowing health is one of the first essentials of genius; and shows how triumphant a part it played in the careers of such mighty men of intellectual valor as Leonardo da Vinci, Kant, Wordsworth, and Sir Walter Scott.

Is the reader still unconvinced that physical exuberance is necessary to the artist? Then let him read biography and note the paralyzing effect upon the biographees, of sickness and half sickness and three quarter wellness. He will see that, as a rule, the masters have done their most telling and lasting work with the tides of physical vim at flood. For the genius is no Joshua. He cannot make the sun of the mind and the moon of the spirit stand still while the tides of health are ebbing seaward. Indeed biography should not be necessary to convince the fair-minded reader. Autobiography should answer. Just let him glance back over his own experience and

say whether he has not thought his deepest thoughts and performed his most brilliant deeds under the intoxication of a stimulant no less heady than that of exuberant health.

There is, of course, the vexed question of the sickly genius. My personal belief is firm that, as a rule, he has won his triumphs *despite* bad health, and not — as some like to imagine — because of bad health. To this rule there are a few often cited exceptions. Now, no one can deny that there is a pathological brilliance of good cheer in the works of Stevenson and other tubercular artists. The white plague is a powerful mental stimulant. It is a double-distilled extract of baseless optimism. But this optimism, like that resulting from other stimulants, is dearly bought. Its shrift is too short. And let nobody forget that for each variety of pathological optimism and brilliance and beauty there are ninety and nine corresponding sorts of pathological pessimism and dullness and ugliness induced by disorders of the liver,

heart, stomach, brain, skin, and so on without end.

The thing for artists to do is to find out what physical conditions make for the best art in the long run, and then secure these conditions in as short a run as possible. If tuberculosis makes for it, then by all means let those of us who are sincerely devoted to art be inoculated without delay. If the family doctor refuses to oblige, all we have to do is to avoid fresh air, kiss indiscriminately, practice a systematic neglect of colds, and frequent the subway during rush hours. If alcohol makes for the best art, let us forthwith be admitted to the bar — the stern judgment bar where each solitary drinker is arraigned. For it is universally admitted that in art, quality is more important than quantity. "If that powerful corrosive, alcohol, only makes us do a little first-class work, what matter if it corrode us to death immediately afterwards? We shall have had our day." Thus many a gallant soul argues. But is there not

another ideal which is as far above mere quality as quality is above mere quantity? I think there is. It is quantity of quality. And quantity of quality is exactly the thing that cannot brook the corrosiveness of powerful stimulants.

I am not satisfied, however, that stimulants make entirely for the fine quality of even the short shrift. To my ear, tubercular optimism, when thumped on the chest, sounds a bit hollow. It does not ring quite as true as healthy optimism because one feels in the long run its automatic, pathological character. Thus tubercular, alcoholized, and drugged art may often be recognized by its somewhat artificial, unhuman, abnormal quality. I believe that if the geniuses who have done their work under the influence of these stimulants had, instead, trained sound bodies as for an Olympic victory, the arts would to-day be the richer in quantity of quality. On this point George Meredith wrote a trenchant word in a letter to W. G. Collins:

I think that the notion of drinking any kind of alcohol as a stimulant for intellectual work can have entered the minds of those only who snatch at the former that they may conceive a fictitious execution of the latter. Stimulants may refresh, and may even temporarily comfort, the body after labor of brain; they do not help it — not even in the lighter kinds of labor. They unseat the judgment, pervert vision. Productions, cast off by the aid of the use of them, are but flashy, trashy stuff — or exhibitions of the prodigious in wildness or grotesque conceit, of the kind which Hoffman's tales give, for example; he was one of the few at all eminent, who wrote after drinking.

To reinforce the opinion of the great Englishman I cannot forbear giving that of an equally great American:

Never [wrote Emerson] can any advantage be taken of nature by a trick. The spirit of the world, the great calm presence of the Creator, comes not forth to the sorceries of opium or of wine. The sublime vision comes to the pure and simple soul in a clean and chaste body. . . . The poet's habit of living should be set on so low a key that the common influences should delight him. His cheerfulness should be the gift of the sunlight; the air should suffice for his inspiration, and he should be tipsy with water.

In other words, the artist should keep himself in a condition so fit as to need no other stimulant than his own exuberance. But this should always flow as freely as beer at a college reunion. And there should always be plenty in reserve. It were well to consider whether there is not some connection between decadent art and decadent bodies. A friend of mine recently attended a meeting of decadent painters and reported that he could not find a chin or a forehead in the room.

One reason why so many of the world's great since Greece have neglected to store up an overplus of vitality is that exercise is well-nigh indispensable thereto; and exercise has not seemed to them sufficiently dignified. We are indebted to the dark ages for this dull superstition. It was then that the monasteries built gloomy granite greenhouses for the flower of the world's intellect, that it might deteriorate in the darkness and perish without reproducing its kind. The monastic system held the body a vile thing, and believed

that to develop and train it was beneath the dignity of the spiritually elect. So flagellation was substituted for perspiration, much as, in the Orient, scent is substituted for soap — and with no more satisfactory result. This false notion of dignity has since then, by keeping men out of flannels, gymnasium suits, running-tights, and overalls, performed prodigies in the work of blighting the flowers of the mind and stunting the fruit trees of the spirit.

To-day, however, we are escaping from the old superstition. We begin to see that there is no complete dignity for man without a dignified physique; and that there is no physical dignity to compare with that of the hard-trained athlete. True, he who trains can hardly keep up the old-time pose of the grand old man or the grand young man. He must perforce be more human and natural. But this sort of grandeur is now going out of fashion. And its absence must show to advantage in his work.

As a rule the true artist is a most devoted and self-sacrificing person. Ever since the piping times of Pericles he has usually been willing to sacrifice to the demands of his art most of the things he enjoys excepting poor health. Wife, children, friends, credit — all may go by the board. But his poor health he addresses with solemn, scriptural loyalty: "Whither thou goest I will go: and where thou lodgest I will lodge. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried." Not that he enjoys the misery incidental to poor health. But he most thoroughly enjoys a number of its causes. Sitting up too late at night is what he enjoys; smoking too much, drinking too much, yielding to the exhausting sway of the divine efflatus for longer hours at a time than he has any business to, bolting unbalanced meals, and so on.

But the artist is finding out that poor health is the very first enjoyment which he ought to sacrifice; that the sacrifice is by no means as heroic as it appears; and that, once it is ac-

complished, the odds are that all the other things he thought he must offer up may be added unto him through his own increased efficiency.

No doubt, all this business of regimen, of constant alertness and petty self-sacrifice, is bound to grow irksome before it settles down in life and becomes habitual. But what does a little irksomeness count — or even a great deal of irksomeness — as against the long, deep thrill of doing better than you thought you ever knew how — of going from strength to strength and creating that which will elevate and delight mankind long after the pangs of installing regimen are forgotten and you have once and for all broken training and laid you down to sleep over?

The reason why great men and women are so often cynical about their own success is this: they have been so immoderate in their enjoyment of poor health that when the hour of victory comes, they lack the exuberance and self-restraint essential to the savoring of

achievement or of any other pleasure. I believe that the successful invalid is more apt to be cynical about his success than the healthy failure about his failure. The latter is usually an optimist. But this is a hard belief to substantiate. For the perfectly healthy failure does not grow on every bush.

If only the physical conscientiousness of the Greeks had never been allowed to die out, the world to-day would be manifoldly a richer, fairer, and more inspiring place. As it is, we shall never be able to reckon up our losses in genius: in Shakespeares whose births were frustrated by the preventable illness or death of their possible parents; in Schuberts who sickened or died from preventable causes before they had delivered a note of their message; in Giorgiones whom a suicidally ignorant conduct of physical life condemned to have their work cheapened and curtailed. What overwhelming losses has art not sustained by having the ranks of its artists and their most creative audiences decimated by

the dullness of mediocre health! It is hard to endure the thought of what the geniuses of the modern world might have been able to accomplish if only they had lived and trained like athletes and been treated with a small part of the practical consideration and live sympathy which humanity bestows on a favorite ball-player or prize-fighter.

To-day there is still a vast amount of superstition arrayed against the truth that fullness of life and not grievous necessity is the mother of artistic invention. Necessity is, of course, only the stepmother of invention. But men like to convince themselves that sickness and morbidity are good for the arts, just as they delightedly embrace the conviction, and hold it with a death-grip, that a life of harassing poverty and anxious preoccupation is indispensable to the true poet. The circumstance that this belief runs clean counter to the showing of history does not embarrass them. Convinced against their will, most people are of the same opinion still.

And they enthusiastically assault and batter any one who points out the truth, as I shall endeavor to do in chapter eight.

Even if the ideal of physical efficiency had been revived as little as a century ago, how much our world would be the gainer! If Richard Wagner had only known how and what to eat and how to avoid catching cold every other month, we would not have so many dull, dreary places to overlook in "The Ring," and would, instead, have three or four more immortal tone-dramas than his colds and indigestions gave him time to write. One hates to think what Poe might have done in literature if he had taken a cure and become a chip of the old oaken bucket. Tuberculosis, they now say, is preventable. If only they had said so before the death of Keats! . . .

It makes one lose patience to think how Schiller shut himself up in a stuffy closet of a room all day with his exhausting work; and how the sole recreation he allowed himself during the week was a solemn game of

l'hombre with the philosopher Schelling. And then he wondered why he could not get on with his writing and why he was forever catching cold (*einen starken Schnupfen*); and why his head was so thick half the time that he couldn't do a thing with it. In his correspondence with Goethe it is exasperating to observe that these great poets kept so little reserve vim in stock that a slight change of temperature or humidity, or even a dark day, was enough to overdraw their health account and bankrupt their work. How glorious it would have been if they had only stored up enough exuberance to have made them health magnates, impervious to the slings and arrows of outrageous February, and able to snap their fingers and flourish inspired quills in the face of a vile March! In that case their published works might not, perhaps, have gained much in bulk, but the masterpieces would now surely represent a far larger proportion of their *Sämmtliche Werke* than they do. And the second part of

"Faust" would not, I think, contain that lament about the flesh so seldom having wings to match those of the spirit.

"Ach! zu des Geistes Flügeln wird so leicht
Kein korperlicher Flügel sich gesellen."

Some of the most opulent and powerful spirits ever seen on earth have scarcely done more than indicate what kind of birthrights they bartered away for a mess of pottage. Coleridge, for example, ceased to write poetry after thirty because, by dissipating his overplus of life, he had too grievously wronged what he described as

"This body that does me grievous wrong."

After all, there are comparatively few masters, since the glory that was Greece, who have not half buried their talents in the earthy darkness of mediocre health. When we survey the army of modern genius, how little of the sustained ring and resilience and triumphant immortal youth of real exuberance do we find there! Instead of a band of sound, alert,

well-equipped soldiers of the mind and spirit, behold a sorry-looking lot of stragglers painfully limping along with lack-luster eyes, or eyes bright with the luster of fever. And the people whom they serve are not entirely free from blame. They have neglected to fill the soldiers' knapsacks, or put shirts on their backs. As for footgear, it is the usual campaign army shoe, made of blotting paper — the shoe that left red marks behind it at Valley Forge and Gettysburg and San Juan Hill. I believe that a better time is coming and that the real renaissance of creative art is about to dawn. For we and our army of artists are now beginning to see that if the artist is completely to fulfill his function he must be able to run — not alone with patience, but also with the brilliance born of abounding vitality — the race that is set before him. This dawning belief is the greatest hope of modern art.

It does one good to see how artists, here, there, and everywhere, are beginning to grow enthusiastic over the new-old gospel of bodily

efficiency, and physically to "revive the just designs of Greece." The encouraging thing is that the true artist who once finds what an impulse is given his work by rigorous training, is never content to slump back to his former vegetative, death-in-life existence. His daily prayer has been said in a single line by a recent American poet:

"Life, grant that we may live until we die."

In every way the artist finds himself the gainer by cutting down his hours of work to the point where he never loses his reserve of energy. He now is beginning to take absolute — not merely relative — vacations, and more of them. For he remembers that no man's work — not even Rembrandt's or Beethoven's or Shakespeare's — is ever *too* good; and that every hour of needed rest or recreation makes the ensuing work better. It is being borne in on the artist that a health-book like Fisher's "Making Life Worth While" is of as much professional value to him as many a treatise

on the practice of his craft. Insight into the physiological basis of his life-work can save the artist, it seems, from those periods of black despair which he once used to employ in running his head against a concrete wall, and raging impotently because he could not butt through. Now, instead of laying his futility to a mysteriously malignant fate, or to the persecution of secret enemies, he is likely to throw over stimulants and late hours and take to the open road, the closed squash-court, and the sleeping-porch. And presently armies cannot withhold him from joyful, triumphant labor.

The artist is finding that exuberance, this Open Sesame to the things that count, may not be won without the friendly collaboration of the pores; and that two birds of paradise may be killed with one stone (which is precious above rubies) by giving the mind fun while one gives the pores occupation. Sport is this precious stone. There is, of course, something to be said for sportless exercise.

It is fairly good for the artist to perform solemn antics in a gymnasium class, to gesture impassionedly with dumb-bells, and tread the mill of the circular running-track. But it is far better for him to go in with equal energy for exercise which, while developing the body, re-creates the mind and spirit. That kind of exercise is best, in my opinion, which offers plenty of variety and humor and the excitement of competition. I mean games like tennis, baseball, handball, golf, lacrosse, and polo, and sports like swift-water canoeing and fly-fishing, boxing, and fencing. These take the mind of the artist quite away from its preoccupations and then restore it to them, unless he has taken too much of a good thing, with a fresh viewpoint and a zest for work.

Sport is one of the chief makers of exuberance because of its purging, exhilarating, and constructive effects on body, mind, and spirit. So many contemporary artists are being converted to sport that the artistic type seems to be changing under our eyes. It was only yes-

terday that the worker in literature, sculpture, painting, or music was a sickly, morbid, anæmic, peculiar specimen, distrusted at sight by the average man, and a shining mark for all the cast-off wit of the world. Gilbert never tired of describing him in "Patience." He was a "foot-in-the-grave young man," or a "*Je-ne-sais-quoi* young man." He was

> "A most intense young man,
> A soulful-eyed young man.
> An ultra-poetical, superæsthetical, Out-of-the-way young man."

To-day, what a change! Where is this young man? Most of his ilk have accompanied the snows of yester-year. And a goodly proportion of those who make merry in their room are sure-eyed, well set-up, ruddy, muscular chaps, about whom the average man may jeer and quote slanderous doggerel only at his peril. But somehow or other the average man likes this new type better and does not want to jeer at him, but goes and buys his work instead.

Faint though distinct, one begins to hear the new note of exuberance spreading through the arts. On canvas it registers the fact that the painters are migrating in hordes to live most of the year in the open country. It vibrates in the sparkling tone of the new type of musical performer like Willeke, the 'cellist. Like a starter's pistol it sounds out of the writings of hard-trained men of the hour like John Masefield and Alfred Noyes. One has only to compare the overflowing life and sanity of workers like these with the condition of the ordinary "Out-of-the-way young man" to see what a gulf yawns between exuberance and exhaustion, between absolute sanity and a state somewhere on the sunny side of mild insanity. And I believe that as yet we catch only a faint glimpse of the glories of the physical renaissance. Wait until this new religion of exuberance is a few generations older and eugenics has said her say!

Curiously enough, the decadent artists who pride themselves on their extreme modernity

are the ones who now seem to cling with the most reactionary grip to the old-fashioned, invertebrate type of physique. The rest are in a fair way to undergo such a change as came to Queed, the sedentary hero of Mr. Harrison's novel, when he took up boxing. As sport and the artists come closer together, they should have a good effect on one another. The artists will doubtless make sport more formful, rhythmical, and beautiful. Sport, on the other hand, ought before long to influence the arts by making sportsmen of the artists.

Now good sportsmanship is composed of fairness, team-work, the grace of a good loser, the grace of a good winner, modesty, and gameness. The first two of these amount to an equitable passion for a fair field and no favor, and a willingness to subordinate star-play, or personal gain, to team-play, or communal gain. Together they imply a feeling for true democracy. To be converted to the religion of sportsmanship means to become

more socially minded. I think it is more than a coincidence that at the moment when the artists are turning to sport, their work is taking on the brotherly tone of democracy. The call of brotherhood is to-day one of the chief preoccupations of poetry, the drama, ideal sculpture, and mural decoration. For this rapid change I should not wonder if the democracy of sportsmanship were in part responsible.

The third element of sportsmanship is the grace of a good loser. Artists to-day are better losers than were the "foot-in-the-grave young men." Among them one now finds less and less childish petulance, outspoken jealousy of others' success, and apology for their own failure. Some of this has been shamed out of them by discovering that the good sportsman never apologizes or explains away his defeat. And they are importing these manly tactics into the game of art. It has not taken them long to see how ridiculous an athlete makes himself who hides behind

the excuse of sickness or lack of training. They are impressed by the way in which the non-apologetic spirit is invading the less athletic games, even down to such a sedentary affair as chess. This remarkable rule, for example, was proposed in the recent chess match between Lasker and Capablanca:

> Illness shall not interfere with the playing of any game, on the ground that it is the business of the players so to train themselves that their bodies shall be in perfect condition; and it is their duty, which by this rule is enforced, to study their health and live accordingly.

The fourth factor of sportsmanship is the grace of a good winner. It would seem as though the artist were learning not only to keep from gloating over his vanquished rival, but also to be generous and minimize his own victory. In Gilbert's day the failure did all the apologizing. To-day less apologizing is done by the failure and more by the success. The master in art is learning modesty, and from whom but the master in sport? There

are in the arts to-day fewer megalomaniacs and persons afflicted with delusions of grandeur than there were among the "*Je-ne-sais-quoi* young men." Sport has made them more normal spiritually, while making them more normal physically. It has kept them younger. Old age has been attacked and driven back all along the line. One reason why we no longer have so many grand old men is that we no longer have so many old men. Instead we have numbers of octogenarian sportsmen like the late Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, who have not yet been caught by the arch-reactionary fossil-collector, Senility. This is a fair omen for the future of progress. "If only the leaders of the world's thought and emotion," writes Bourne in "Youth," "can, by caring for the physical basis, keep themselves young, why, the world will go far to catching up with itself and becoming contemporaneous."

Gameness is the final factor of good sportsmanship. In the matter of gameness, I grant

that sport has little to teach the successful artist. For it takes courage, dogged persistence, resiliency — in short, the never-say-die spirit to succeed in any of the arts. It takes the Browning spirit of those who

"fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake."

It takes the typical Anglo-Saxon gameness of Johnny Armstrong of the old ballad:

"Said John, 'Fight on, my merry men all.
I am a little hurt, but I am not slain;
I will lay me down for to bleed a while,
And then I'll rise and fight with you again.'"

Yes, but what of the weaker brothers and sisters in art who have not yet succeeded — perhaps for want of these very qualities? I believe that a newly developed spirit of sportsmanship, acting upon a newly developed body, will presently bring to many a disheartened struggler just that increment of resilient gameness which will mean success instead of failure.

Thus, while our artists show a tendency to hark back to the Greek physical ideal, they

are not harking backward but forward when they yield to the mental and spiritual influences of sportsmanship. For this spirit was unknown to the ancient world. Until yesterday art and sportsmanship never met. But now that they are mating I am confident that there will come of this union sons and daughters who shall joyfully obey the summons that is still ringing down to us over the heads of the anæmic contemporaries of the exuberant old sportsman, Walt Whitman:

"Poets to come! orators, singers, musicians to come!
Not to-day is to justify me and answer what I am for,
But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental,
greater than before known,
Arouse! for you must justify me."

VII

PRINTED JOY

The old joy which makes us more debtors to poetry than anything else in life.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

AMERICA is trying to emerge from the awkward age. Its body is full-grown. Its spirit is still crude with a juvenile crudity. What does this spirit need? Next to contact with true religion, it most needs contact with true poetry. It needs to absorb the grace, the wisdom, the idealistic beauty of the art, and thrill in rhyme with poetry's profound, spiritual insights.

The promising thing is that America is beginning to do exactly this to-day. The entire history of our enjoyment of poetry might be summed up in that curious symbol which appears over the letter *n* in the word "cañon." A rise, a fall, a rise. Here is the whole story of the American poetry-lover.

His enthusiasm first reached a high point about the middle of the nineteenth century. A generation later it fell into a swift decline. But three or four years ago it began to revive so rapidly that a poetry-lover's renaissance is now a reality. This renaissance has not yet been explained, although the majority of readers and writers feel able to tell why poetry declined. Let us glance at a few of the more popular explanations.

Many say that poetry declined in America because we turned ourselves into a nation of entirely prosaic materialists. But if this is true, how do they explain our present national solicitude for song-birds and waterfalls, for groves of ancient trees, national parks, and city-planning? How do they explain the fact that our annual expenditure on the art of music is six times that of Germany, the Fatherland of Tone? And how do they account for the flourishing condition of some of our other arts? If we are hopelessly materialistic, why should American painters and sculp-

tors have such a high world-standing? And why should their strongest, most original, most significant work be precisely in the sphere of poetic, suggestive landscape, and ideal sculpture? The answer is self-evident. It is no utterly prosaic age, and people that founded our superb orchestras, that produced and supported Winslow Homer, Tryon, and Woodbury, French, Barnard, and Saint Gaudens. A more poetic hand than Wall Street's built St. Thomas's and the cathedral, terminals and towers of New York, Trinity Church in Boston, the Minnesota State Capitol, Bar Harbor's Building of Arts, West Point, and Princeton University. It is plain that our poetic decline was not wholly due to materialism.

Other philosophers are sure that whatever was the matter with poetry was the fault of the poets themselves. Popular interest slackened, they say, because the art first degenerated. Now an obvious answer to this is that no matter how dead the living poets of

any age become, men may always turn, if they will, to those dead poets of old who live forever on their shelves. But let us grant for the sake of argument that any decline of contemporary poets is bound to effect poetry-lovers in some mysteriously disastrous way. And let us recall the situation back there in the seventies when the ebb of poetic appreciation first set in. At that time Whittier, Holmes, Emerson, and Whitman had only just topped the crest of the hill of accomplishment, and the last-named was as yet no more generally known than was the rare genius of the young Lanier. Longfellow, who remains even to-day the most popular of our poets, was still in full swing. Lowell was in his prime. Thus it appears that public appreciation, and not creative power, was the first to trip and topple down the slopes of the Parnassian hill. Not until then did the poet come "tumbling after."

Moreover, in the light of modern æsthetic psychology, this seems the more natural order

of events. It takes two to make a work of art: one to produce, one to appreciate. The creative appreciator is a correlative of all artistic expression. It is almost impossible for the artist to accomplish anything amid the destructive atmosphere exhaled by the ignorant, the stupid, the indifferent, the callous, or the actively hostile. It follows that the demand for poetry is created no more by the supply than the supply is created by the demand. Thus the general indifference to this one department of American art was *not* primarily caused by the degenerating supply.

The decline and fall of our poetic empire have yet other Gibbons who say that our civilization suddenly changed from the country to the urban type, and that our love of poetry began to disappear simultaneously with the general exodus from the countryside and the mushroom growth of the large cities. So far I agree; but not with their reason. For they say that poetry declined be-

cause cities are such dreadfully unpoetic things; because they have become synonymous only with riveting-machines and the kind of building that the Germans call the "heaven-scratcher," with elevated railways, "sand hogs," whirring factories, and alleys reeking with the so-called "dregs" of Europe. They claim that the new and hopelessly vulgar creed of the modern city is epitomized by such things as a certain signboard in New York, which offers a typically neo-urban solution of the old problem, "What is art?"

PARAGON PANTS
ARE ART

the board declares. And this, they say, is about as poetic as a large city ever becomes.

Now let us glance for a moment at the poems in prose and verse of Mr. James Oppenheim, a young man for whom a metropolis is almost completely epitomized by

the riveting-machine, the sweat-shop, and the slum. There we discover that this poet's vision has pierced straight through the city's veneer of ugly commonplace to the beauty shimmering beneath. In his eyes the sinewy, heroic forms of the builders, clinging high on their frail scaffoldings and nonchalantly hurling red-hot rivets through space, are so many young gods at play with elemental forces. The sweat-shop is transmuted into as grim and glorious a battlefield as any Tours or Gettysburg of them all. And the dingy, battered old "L" train, as it clatters through the East Side early on "morose, gray Monday morning," becomes a divine chariot

> "winging through Deeps of the Lord with its eighty Earth-anchored Souls."

Oh, yes; there is "God's plenty" of poetry in these sights and sounds, if only one looks deep enough to discover the beauty of homeliness. But there is even more of beauty and poetic inspiration to be drawn from the city

by him who, instead of thus straitly confining his gaze to any one aspect of urban life, is able to see it steadily and see it whole, with its subtle *nuances* and its overpowering dramatic contrasts — as a twentieth-century Walt Whitman, for example, might see it if he had a dash of Tennyson's technical equipment, of Arnold's sculpturesque polish and restraint, of Lanier's instinct for sensuous beauty. What "songs greater than before known" might such a poet not sing as he wandered close to precious records of the Anglo-Saxon culture of the race amid the stately colonial peace and simplicity of St. Mark's church-yard, with the vividly colored life of all southeastern Europe surging about that slender iron fence — children of the blood of Chopin and Tschaikowsky; of Gutenberg, Kossuth, and Napoleon; of Isaiah and Plato, Leonardo and Dante — with the wild strains of the gypsy orchestra floating across Second Avenue, and to the southward a glimpse aloft in a rarer, purer air of builders

clambering on the cupola of a neighboring Giotto's tower built of steel? Who dares say that the city is unpoetic? *It is one of the most poetic places on earth.*

These, then, are the chief explanations which have been offered us to-day of the historic decline of the American poetry-lover. We weigh them, and find them wanting. Why? Because they have sought, like radiographers, far beneath the surface; whereas the real trouble has been only skin deep. I shall try to show the nature of this trouble; and how, by beginning to cure it, we have already brought on a poetic renaissance.

Most of us who care for poetry frequently have one experience in common. During our summer vacations in the country we suddenly re-discover the well-thumbed "Golden Treasury" of Palgrave, and the "Oxford Book of Verse" which have been so unaccountably neglected during the city winter. We wander farther into the poetic fields and revel in Keats and Shakespeare. We may even attempt once

more to get beyond the first book of the "Faërie Queene," or fumble again at the combination lock which seems to guard the meaning of the second part of "Faust." And we find these occupations so invigorating and joyful that we model and cast an iron resolution to the effect that this winter, whatever betide, we will read a little poetry every day, or every week, as the case may be. On that we plunge back into the beautiful, poetic, inspiring city, and adhere to our poetry-reading program — for exactly a fortnight. Then, unaccountably, our resolve begins to slacken. We cannot seem to settle our minds to ordered rhythms "where more is meant than meets the ear." Our resolve collapses. Once again Palgrave is covered with dust. But vacation time returns. After a few days in green pastures and beside still waters the soul suddenly turns like a homing-pigeon to poetry. And the old, perplexing cycle begins anew.

A popular magazine once sent a certain

young writer and ardent amateur of poetry on a long journey through the Middle West. He took but one book in his bag. It was by Whitman (the poet of cities, mark). And he determined to read it every evening in his bedroom after the toils of the day. The first part of the trip ran in the country. "Afoot and light-hearted" he took to the open road every morning, and reveled every evening in such things as "Manahatta," "The Song of Joys," and "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry." Then he carried his poet of cities to a city. But the two would have nothing to do with one another. And to the traveler's perplexity, a place no larger than Columbus, Ohio, put a violent end to poetry on that trip.

In our day most poetry-lovers have had such experiences. These have been hard to explain, however, only because their cause has been probed for too profoundly. *The chief cause of the decline of poetry was not spiritual but physical.* Cities are not unpoetic in spirit. It is only in the physical sense that Emerson's

warning is true: "If thou fill thy brain with Boston and New York . . . thou shalt find no radiance of meaning in the lonely wastes of the pine woods." The trouble was this: that the modern type of city, when it started into being, back in the seventies, began to take from men, and to use up, that margin of nervous energy, that exuberant overplus of vitality of which so much has already been said in this book, and which is always needed for the true appreciation of poetry. Grant Allen has shown that man, when he is conscious of a superfluity of sheer physical strength, gives himself to play; and in like manner, when he is conscious of a superfluity of receptive power, *which has a physical basis*, he gives himself to art.

Now, though all of the arts demand of their appreciators this overplus of nervous energy (and Heaven knows perfectly well how inadequate a supply is offered up to music and the arts of design!), yet the appreciation of poetry above that of the sister arts demands

this bloom on the cheek of existence. For poetry, with quite as much of emotional demand as the others, combines a considerably greater and more persistent intellectual demand, involving an unusual amount of physical wear and tear. Hence, in an era of overstrain, poetry is the first of the arts to suffer.

Most lovers of poetry must realize, when they come to consider it, that their pleasure in verse rises and falls, like the column of mercury in a barometer, with the varying levels of their physical overplus. Physical overplus, however, is the thing which life in a modern city is best calculated to keep down.

Surely it was no mere coincidence that, back there in the seventies, just at the edge of the poetic decline, city life began to grow so immoderately in volume and to be "speeded up" and "noised up" so abruptly that it took our bodies by surprise. This process has kept on so furiously that the bodies of most of us have never been able to catch up. No large

number have yet succeeded in readjusting themselves completely to the new pace of the city. And this continues to exact from most of us more nervous energy than any life may, which would keep us at our best. Hence, until we have succeeded either in accomplishing the readjustment, or in spending more time in the country, the appreciation of poetry has continued to suffer.

Even in the country, it is, of course, perfectly true that life spins faster now than it used to — what with telephones and interurban trolleys, the motor, and the R.F.D. But this rural progress has arrived with no such stunning abruptness as to outdistance our powers of readjustment. When we go from city to country we recede to a rate of living with which our nervous systems can comfortably fall in, and still control for the use of the mind and spirit a margin of that delicious vital bloom which resembles the ring of the overtones in some beautiful voice.

But how is it practicable to keep this

margin in the city, when the roar of noisy traffic over noisy pavements, the shrieks of newsboy and peddler, the all-pervading chronic excitement, the universal obligation to "step lively," even at a funeral, are every instant laying waste our conscious or unconscious powers? How are we to give the life of the spirit its due of poetry when our precious margin is forever leaking away through lowered vitality and even sickness due to lack of sleep, unhygienic surroundings, constant interruption (or the expectation thereof), and the impossibility of relaxation owing to the never-ending excitement and interest and sexual stimulus of the great human pageant — its beauty and suggestiveness?

Apart from the general destruction of the margin of energy, one special thing that the new form of city life does to injure poetry is to keep uppermost in men's consciousness a feverish sense of the importance of the present moment. We might call this sense the journalistic spirit of the city. How many

typical metropolitans one knows who are forever in a small flutter of excitement over whatever is just happening, like a cub reporter on the way to his first fire, or a neuræsthete — if one may coin a word — who perceives a spider on her collarette. This habit of mind soon grows stereotyped, and is, of course, immensely stimulated by the multitudinous editions of our innumerable newspapers. The city gets one to living so intensely in the present minute, and often in the very most sensational second of that minute, that one grows impatient of the "olds," and comes to regard a constantly renewed and increased dose of "news" as the only present help in a chronic time of trouble. This is a kind of mental drug-habit. And its origin is physical. It is a morbid condition induced by the overpaced life of cities.

Long before the rise of the modern city — indeed, more than a century ago — Goethe, who was considerably more than a century ahead of his age, wrote to Schiller from Frank-

fort of the journalistic spirit of cities and its relation to poetry:

It seems to me very remarkable how things stand with the people of a large city. They live in a constant delirium of getting and consuming, and the thing we call atmosphere can neither be brought to their attention nor communicated to them. All recreations, even the theater, must be mere distractions; and the great weakness of the reading public for newspapers and romances comes just from the fact that the former always, and the latter generally, brings distraction into the distraction. Indeed, I believe that I have noticed a sort of dislike of poetic productions — or at least in so far as they *are* poetic — which seems to me to follow quite naturally from these very causes. Poetry requires, yes, it absolutely commands, concentration. It isolates man against his own will. It forces itself upon him again and again; and is as uncomfortable a possession as a too constant mistress.

If this reporter's attitude of mind was so rampant in cultivated urban Germany a century ago as to induce "a sort of dislike of poetic productions," what sort of dislike of them must it not be inducing to-day? For the appreciation of poetry cannot live under

the same roof with the journalistic spirit. The art needs long, quiet vistas backward and forward, such as are to be had daily on one of those "lone heaths" where Hazlitt used to love to stalk ideas, but such as are not to be met with in Times Square or the Subway.

The joyful side of the situation is that this need is being met. A few years ago the city dwellers of America began to return to nature. The movement spread until every one who could afford it, habitually fled from the city for as long a summer outing as possible. More and more people learned the delightful sport of turning an abandoned farm into a year-round country estate. The man who was tied to a city office formed the commuting habit, thus keeping his wife and children permanently away from the wear and tear of town. The suburban area was immensely increased by the rapid spread of motoring.

Thus, it was recently made possible for hundreds of thousands of Americans to live, at least a considerable part of the year, where

they could hoard up an overplus of vitality. The result was that these well-vitalized persons, whenever they returned to the city, were better able to stand — and adjust themselves to — the severe urban pace, than were the fagged city people. It was largely by the impact of this new vitality that the city was roused to the importance of physical efficiency, so that it went in for parks, gymnasia, baths, health and welfare campaigns, athletic fields, playgrounds, Boy Scouts, Campfire Girls, and the like.

There are signs everywhere that we Americans have, by wise living, begun to win back the exuberance which we lost at the rise of the modern city. One of the surest indications of this is the fact that the nation has suddenly begun to read poetry again, very much as the exhausted poetry-lover instinctively turns again to his Palgrave during the third week of vacation. In returning to neglected nature we are returning to the most neglected of the arts. The renaissance of poetry is here.

And men like Masefield, Noyes, and Tagore begin to vie in popularity with the moderately popular novelists. Moreover this is only the beginning. Aviation has come and is reminding us of the ancient prophecy of H. G. Wells that the suburbs of a city like New York will now soon extend from Washington to Albany. Urban centers are being diffused fast; but social-mindedness is being diffused faster. Men are wishing more and more to share with each brother man the brimming cup of life. Aircraft and true democracy are on the way to bear all to the land of perpetual exuberance. And on their wings the poet will again mount to that height of authority and esteem from which, in the healthful, athletic days of old, Homer and Sophocles dominated the minds and spirits of their fellow-men. That is to say — he will mount if we let him. In the following chapter I shall endeavor to show why the American poet has as yet scarcely begun to share in the poetry-renaissance.

VIII

THE JOYFUL HEART FOR POETS

Nothing probably is more dangerous for the human race than science without poetry, civilization without culture.

HOUSTON STEWART CHAMBERLAIN.

A poet in history is divine, but a poet in the next room is a joke.

MAX EASTMAN.

IN the last two chapters we have seen the contemporary master of various arts, and the reader of poetry, engaged in cultivating the joyful heart. But there is one artist who has not yet been permitted to join in this agreable pastime. He is the American poet. And as his inclusion would be an even more joyful thing for his land than for himself, this book may not ignore him.

The American poet has not yet begun to keep pace with the poetry-lovers' renaissance. He is no very arresting figure; and therefore you, reader, are already considering a skip to chapter nine. Well, if you are no more inter-

ested in him or his possibilities than is the average American consumer of British poetry — I counsel you by all means to skip in peace. But if you are one of the few who discern the promise of a vast power latent in the American poet, and would gladly help in releasing this power for the good of the race, I can show you what is the matter with him and what to do about it.

Why has the present renaissance of the poetry-lover not brought with it a renaissance of the American poet? Almost every reason but the true one has been given. The true reason is that our poets are tired. They became exhausted a couple of generations ago; and we have kept them in this condition ever since. In the previous chapter we saw how city life began abruptly to be speeded up in the seventies. At that time the poet — like almost every one else in the city — was unable to readjust his body at once to the new pace. He was like a six-day bicycle racer who should be lapped in a sudden and

continued sprint. That sprint is still going on. Never again has the American poet felt the abounding energy with which he began. And never has he overtaken the leaders.

The reason why the poet is tired is that he lives in the over-paced city. The reason why he lives in the city is that he is chained to it by the nature of his hack-work. And the reason for the hack-work is that the poet is the only one of all the artists whose art almost never offers him a living. He alone is forced to earn in other ways the luxury of performing his appointed task in the world. For, as Goethe once observed, "people are so used to regarding poetic talent as a free gift of the gods that they think the poet should be as free-handed with the public as the gods have been with him."

The poet is tired. Great art, however, is not the product of exhaustion, but of exuberance. It will have none of the skimmed milk of mere existence. Nothing less than the thick, pure cream of abounding vitality will

do. The exhausted artist has but three courses open to him: either to stimulate himself into a counterfeit, and suicidally brief, exuberance; or to relapse into mediocrity; or to gain a healthy fullness of life.

In the previous chapter it was shown why poetry demands more imperatively than any other art, that the appreciator shall bring to it a margin of vitality. For a like reason poetry makes this same inordinate demand upon its maker. It insists that he shall keep himself even more keenly alive than the maker of music or sculpture, painting or architecture. This is the reason why, in the present era of overstrain, the poet's art has been so swift to succumb and so slow to recuperate.

The poet who is obliged to live in the city has not yet been able to readjust his body to the pace of modern urban life, so that he may live among its never-ending conscious and unconscious stimulations and still keep on hand a triumphant reserve of vitality to pour into his poems. Under these new and strenu-

ous conditions, very little real poetry has been written in our cities. American poets, despite their genuine love of town and their struggles to produce worthy lines amid its turmoil, have almost invariably done the best of their actually creative work during the random moments that could be snatched in wood and meadow, by weedy marsh or rocky headland. To his friends it was touching to see with what wistfulness Richard Watson Gilder used to seek his farm at Tyringham for a day or two of poetry after a fortnight of furious office life. Even Walt Whitman — poet of cities that he was — had to retire "precipitate" from his beloved Manahatta in order fitly to celebrate her perfections. In fact, Stedman was perhaps the only one of our more important singers at the close of the century who could do his best work in defiance of Emerson's injunction to the poet: "Thou shalt lie close hid with Nature, and canst not be afforded to the Capitol or the Exchange." But it is pleas-

ant to recall how even that poetic banker brightened up and let his soul expand in the peace of the country.

One reason for the rapidly growing preponderance of women — and especially of unmarried women — among our poetic leaders is, I think, to be found in the fact that women, more often than men, command the means of living for a generous portion of the year that vital, unstrenuous, contemplative existence demanded by poetry as an antecedent condition of its creation. It is a significant fact that, according to Arnold Bennett, nearly all of the foremost English writers live far from the town. Most of the more promising American poets of both sexes, however, have of late had little enough to do with the country. And the result is that the supreme songs of the twentieth century have remained unsung, to eat out the hearts of their potential singers. For fate has thrown most of our poets quite on their own resources, so that they have been obliged to

live in the large cities, supporting life within the various kinds of hack-harness into which the uncommercially shaped withers of Pegasus can be forced. Such harness, I mean, as journalism, editing, compiling, reading for publishers, hack-article writing, and so on. Fate has also seen to it that the poet's make-up is seldom conspicuous by reason of a bull-neck, pugilistic limbs, and the nervous equipoise of a dray-horse. What he may lack in strength, however, he is apt to make up in hectic ambition. Thus it often happens that when the city does not consume quite all of his available energy, the poet, with his probably inadequate physique, chafes against the hack-work and yields to the call of the luring creative ideas that constantly beset him. Then, after yielding, he chafes again, and more bitterly, at his faint, imperfect expression of these dreams, recognizing in despair that he has been creating a mere crude by-product of the strenuous life about him. So he burns the torch of life at both ends, and

the superhuman speed of modern existence eats it through in the middle. Then suddenly the light fails altogether.

Those poets alone who have unusual physical endurance are able to do even a small amount of steady, fine-grained work in the city. The rest are as effectually debarred from it as factory children are debarred from learning the violin well at the fag end of their days of toil. In her autobiography Miss Jane Addams speaks some luminous words about the state of society which forces finely organized artistic talent into the wearing struggle for mere existence. She refers to it as "one of the haunting problems of life; why do we permit the waste of this most precious human faculty, this consummate possession of all civilization? When we fail to provide the vessel in which it may be treasured, it runs out upon the ground and is irretrievably lost."

I wonder if we have ever stopped to ask ourselves why so many of our more recent

poets have died young. Was it the hand of God, or the effort to do the work of two in a hostile environment, that struck down before their prime such spirits as Sidney Lanier, Edward Rowland Sill, Frederic Lawrence Knowles, Arthur Upson, Richard Hovey, William Vaughn Moody, and the like? These were poets whom we bound to the strenuous city, or at least to hack-work which sapped over-much of their vitality. An old popular fallacy keeps insisting that genius "will out." This is true, but only in a sadder sense than the stupidly proverbial one. As a matter of fact, the light of genius is all too easily blown out and trampled out by a blind and deaf world. But we of America are loath to admit this. And if we do not think of genius as an unquenchable flame, we are apt to think of it as an amazingly hardy plant, more tough than horse-brier or cactus. Only a few of us have yet begun to realize that the flower of genius is not the flower of an indestructible weed, but of a fastidious exotic, which usually demands

good conditions for bare existence, and needs a really excellent environment and constant tending if it is to thrive and produce the finest possible blooms. Mankind has usually shown enormous solicitude lest the man of genius be insufficiently supplied with that trouble and sorrow which is supposed to be quite indispensable to his best work. But here and there the thinkers are beginning to realize that the irritable, impulsive, impractical nature of the genius, in even the most favorable environment, is formed for trouble "as the sparks to fly upward." They see that fortune has slain its hundreds of geniuses, but trouble its ten thousands. And they conclude that their own real solicitude should be, not lest the genius have too little adversity to contend with, but lest he have too much.

We have heard not a little about the conservation of land, ore, wood, and water. The poetry problem concerns itself with an older sort of conservation about which we heard much even as youngsters in college. I mean

the conservation of energy. Our poetry will never emerge from the dusk until either the bodies of our city-prisoned poets manage to overtake the speeding-up process and readjust themselves to it — or until we allow them an opportunity to return for an appreciable part of every year to the country — the place where the poet belongs.

It is true that the masters of the other arts have not fared any too well at our hands; but they do not need help as badly by far as the poets need it. What with commissions and sales, scholarships, fellowships, and substantial prizes, the painters and sculptors and architects and even the musicians have, broadly speaking, been able to learn and practise their art in that peace and security which is well-nigh essential to all artistic apprenticeship and productive mastery. They have usually been able to spend more of the year in the country than the poet. And even when bound as fast as he to the city, they have not been forced to choose between

burning the candle at both ends or abandoning their art.

But for some recondite reason — perhaps because this art cannot be taught at all — it has always been an accepted American conviction that poetry is a thing which may be thrown off at any time as a side issue by highly organized persons, most of whose time and strength and faculties are engaged in a vigorous and engrossing hand-to-hand bout with the wolf on the threshold — a most practical, philistine wolf, moreover, which never heard of rhyme or rhythm, and whose whole acquaintance with prosody is confined to a certain greedy familiarity with frayed masculine and feminine endings.

As a result of this common conviction our poets have almost invariably been obliged to make their art a quite subsidiary and haphazard affair, like the rearing of children by a mother who is forced to go out and scrub from early morning till late at night and has to leave little Johnnie tied in his high chair to

be fed by an older sister on crusts dabbled in the pot of cold coffee. No wonder that so much of our verse "jest growed," like Topsy. And the resulting state of things has but served to reinforce our belief that to make the race of poets spend their days in correcting encyclopædia proof, or clerking, or running, notebook in hand, to fires — inheres in the eternal fitness of things.

Bergson says in "Creative Evolution," that "an intelligence which reflects is one that originally had a surplus of energy to spend, over and above practically useful efforts." Does it not follow that when we make the poet spend all his energy in the practically useful effort of running to fires, we prevent him from enjoying the very advantage which made man a reflective being, to say nothing of a poet?

Perhaps we have never yet realized that this attitude of ours would turn poetic success into a question of the survival of that paradox, the commercially shrewd poet, or

of the poet who by some happy accident of birth or marriage has been given an income, or of that prodigy of versatility who, in our present stage of civilization, besides being mentally and spiritually fit for the poet's calling, is also physically fit to bear the strain of doing two men's work; or, perhaps we had better say, three men's — for simply being a good poet is about as nerve-consuming an occupation as any two ordinary men could support in common — and the third would have to run to fires for the first two.

It is natural to the character of the American business man to declare that the professional poet has no reason for existence *qua* poet unless he can make his art support him. But let the business man bear in mind that if he had the power to enforce such a condition, he would be practically annihilating the art. For it is literally true that, if plays were excluded, it would take not even a five-foot shelf to contain all the first-rate poetry which was ever written by poets in a state of poetic self-

support. "Could a man live by it," the author of "The Deserted Village" once wrote to Henry Goldsmith, "it were not unpleasant employment to be a poet." Alas, the fatal condition! For the art itself has almost never fed and clothed its devotee — at least until his best creative days are done and he has become a "grand old man." More often the poet has attained not even this reward. Wordsworth's lines on Chatterton have a wider application:

"What treasure found he? Chains and pains and sorrow —
Yea, all the wealth those noble seekers find
Whose footsteps mark the music of mankind!
'T was his to lend a life: 't was Man's to borrow:
'T was his to make, but not to share, the morrow."

Those who insist upon judging the art of poetry on the hard American "cash basis" ought to be prepared, for the sake of consistency, to apply the same criterion as well to colleges, public schools, symphony orchestras, institutions for scientific research, missions, settlements, libraries, and all other unlucra-

tive educational enterprises. With inexorable logic they should be prepared to insist that people really do not desire or need knowledge or any sort of uplift because they are not prepared to pay its full cost. It is precisely this sort of logic which would treat the Son of Man if He should appear among us, to a bench in Bryant Park, and a place in the bread-line, and send the mounted police to ride down his socialistic meetings in Union Square. No! poetry and most other forms of higher education have always had to be subsidized — and probably always will. When wisely subsidized, however, this art is very likely to repay its support in princely fashion. In fact, I know of no other investment to-day that would bid fair to bring us in so many thousand per cent. of return as a small fresh-air fund for poets.

We Americans are rather apt to complain of the comparatively poor, unoriginal showing which our poets have as yet made among those of other civilized nations. We are

quietly disgusted that only two of all our bards have ever made their work forcibly felt in Europe; and that neither Poe nor Whitman has ever profoundly influenced the great masses of his own people.

Despite our splendid inheritance, our richly mingled blood, our incomparably stimulating New World atmosphere, why has our poetry made such a meager showing among the nations? The chief reason is obvious. *We have been unwilling to let our poets live while they were working for us.* True, we have the reputation of being an open-handed, even an extravagantly generous folk. But thriftiness in small things often goes with an extravagant disposition, much as manifestations of piety often accompany wickedness like flying buttresses consciously placed outside the edifice. We have spent millions on bronze and marble book-palaces which shall house the works of the poets. We have spent more millions on universities which shall teach these works. But as for making it possible for our

few real poets to produce works, and completely fulfill their priceless functions, we have always satisfied ourselves by decreeing: Let there be a sound cash basis."

So it came to pass that when the first exuberant, pioneer energy-margin of our race began to be consumed by the new and abnormal type of city life, it became no longer possible for the poets to put as much soul-sinew as theretofore into their lines, after they had toilfully earned the luxury of trying to be our idealistic leaders. For often their initial efforts consumed their less than pioneer vitality. And how did we treat them from the first? In the old days we set Longfellow and Lowell at one of the most exhausting of professions — teaching. We made Emerson do one-night lecture-stands all winter long in the West — sometimes for five dollars a lecture and feed for his horse. We made Bryant ruin a gift as elemental as Wordsworth's, in journalism; Holmes, visit patients at all hours of the day and night; Poe, take to newspaper offices

and drink. We made Whitman drive nails, set type and drudge in the Indian Bureau in Washington, from which he was dismissed for writing the most original and the most poetic of American books. Later he was rescued from want only by the humiliation of a public European subscription. Lanier we allowed to waste away in a dingy lawyer's office, then kill himself so fast by teaching and writing railway advertisements and playing the flute in a city orchestra that he was forced to defer composing "Sunrise" until too weak with fever to carry his hand to his lips. And this was eleven years after that brave spirit's single cry of reproach:

> "Why can we poets dream us beauty, so,
> But cannot dream us bread?"

With Lanier the physical exhaustion incident to the modern speeding-up process began to be more apparent. Edward Rowland Sill we did away with in his early prime through journalism and teaching. We curbed

and pinched and stunted the promising art of Richard Watson Gilder by piling upon him several men's editorial work. We created a poetic resemblance between Arthur Upson and the hero of "The Divine Fire" by employing him in a bookstore. We made William Vaughn Moody teach in a city environment utterly hostile to his poetry, and later set the hand that gave us "An Ode in Time of Hesitation" to the building of popular melodrama. These are only a tithe of the things that we have done to the hardiest of those benefactors of ours:

> "The poets, who on earth have made us heirs
> Of truth and pure delight."

It is not pleasant to dwell on the fate of those less sturdy ones who have remained mute, inglorious Miltons for lack of a little practical appreciation and a small part of a small fresh-air fund.

So far as I know, Thomas Bailey Aldrich is the only prominent figure among the poets

of our elder generations who was given the means of devoting himself entirely to his art. And even *his* fortune was not left to him by his practical, poetry-loving friend until so late in the day that his creative powers had already begun to decline through age and over-much magazine editing.

More than almost any other civilized nation we have earned Allen Upward's reproach in "The New Word":

> There are two kinds of human outcasts. Man, in his march upward out of the deep into the light, throws out a vanguard and a rearguard, and both are out of step with the main body. Humanity condemns equally those who are too good for it, and those who are too bad. On its Procrustean bed the stunted members of the race are racked; the giants are cut down. It puts to death with the same ruthless equality the prophet and the atavist. The poet and the drunkard starve side by side. . . . Literature is the chief ornament of humanity; and perhaps humanity never shows itself uglier than when it stands with the pearl shining on its forehead, and the pearl-maker crushed beneath its heel. . . . England will always have fifteen thousand a year for some respectable clergyman; she will never have it for Shelley.

Yes, but how incomparably better England has treated her poets than America has treated hers! What convenient little plums, as De Quincey somewhat wistfully remarked, were always being found for Wordsworth just at the psychological moment; and they were not withheld, moreover, until he was full of years and honors. Indeed, we owe this poet to the poet-by-proxy of whom Wordsworth wrote, in "The Prelude":

> "He deemed that my pursuits and labours, lay
> Apart from all that leads to wealth, or even
> A necessary maintenance insures
> Without some hazard to the finer sense."

How tenderly the frail bodies of Coleridge and of Francis Thompson were cared for by their appreciators. How potently the Civil List and the laureateship have helped a long, if most uneven, line of England's singers. Over against our solitary ageing Aldrich, how many great English poets like Byron, Keats, the Brownings, Tennyson, and Swinburne have found themselves with small but inde-

pendent incomes, free to give their whole unembarrassed souls and all that in them was to their art. And all this since the close of the age of patronage!

Why have we never had a Wordsworth, or a Browning? For one thing, because this nation of philanthropists has been too thoughtless to found the small fellowship in creative poetry which might have freed a Wordsworth of ours from communion with a cash-book to wander chanting his new-born lines among the dreamy Adirondack lakes or the frowning Sierras; or that might have sought out our Browning in his grocery store and built him a modest retreat among the Thousand Islands. If not too thoughtless to act thus, we have been too timid. We have been too much afraid of encouraging weaklings by mistake. We have been, in fact, more afraid of encouraging a single mediocre poet than of neglecting a score of Shelleys. But we should remember that even if the weak are encouraged with the strong, no harm is done.

It can not be too strongly insisted upon that the poor and mediocre verse which has always been produced by every age is practically innocuous. It hurts only the publishers who are constantly being importuned to print the stuff, and the distinguished men and women who are burdened with presentation copies or requests for criticism. These unfortunates all happen to be capable of emitting loud and authoritative cries of distress about the menace of bad poets. But we should discount these cries one hundred per cent. For nobody else is hurt by the bad poets, because nobody else pays the slightest attention to them. Time and their own "inherent perishableness" soon remove all traces of the poetasters. It were better to help hundreds of them than to risk the loss of one new Shelley. And do we realize how many Shelleys we may actually have lost already? I think it possible that we may have had more than one such potential singer to whom we never allowed any leisure or sympathy or margin of vitality to turn into

poetry. Perhaps there is more grim truth than humor in Mark Twain's vision of heaven where Captain Stormfield saw a poet as great as Shakespeare who hailed, I think, from Tennessee. The reason why the world had never heard of him was that his neighbors in Tennessee had regarded him as eccentric and had ridden him out of town on a rail and assisted his departure to a more congenial clime above.

We complain that we have had no poet to rank with England's greatest. I fear that it would have been useless for us to have had such a person. We probably would not have known what to do with him.

I realize that mine is not the popular side of this question and that an occasional poet with an income may be found who will even argue against giving incomes to other poets. Mr. Aldrich, for instance, wrote, after coming into his inheritance:

> "A man should live in a garret aloof,
> And have few friends, and go poorly clad,
> With an old hat stopping the chink in the roof,
> To keep the goddess constant and glad."

But a friend of Mr. Aldrich's, one of his poetic peers, has assured me that it was not the poet's freedom from financial cares at all, but premature age, instead, that made his goddess of poesy fickle after the advent of the pitifully belated fortune. Mr. Stedman spoke a far truer word on this subject. "Poets," he said, "in spite of the proverb, sing best when fed by wage or inheritance." "'T is the convinced belief of mankind," wrote Francis Thompson with a sardonic smile, "that to make a poet sing you must pinch his belly, as if the Almighty had constructed him like certain rudimentarily vocal dolls." "No artist," declares Arnold Bennett, "was ever assisted in his career by the yoke, by servitude, by enforced monotony, by economic inferiority." And Bliss Carman speaks out loud and bold: "The best poets who have come to maturity have always had some means of livelihood at their command. The idea that any sort of artist or workman is all the better for being doomed to a life of

penurious worry, is such a silly old fallacy, one wonders it could have persisted so long." The wolf may be splendid at suckling journalism and various other less inspired sorts of writing, but she is a ferocious old stepmother to poetry.

There are some who snatch eagerly at any argument in support of the existing order, and who triumphantly point out the number of good poems that have been written under "seemingly" adverse conditions. But they do not stop to consider how much better these poems might have been made under "seemingly" favorable conditions. Percy Mackaye is right in declaring that the few singers left to English poetry after our "wholesale driving-out and killing-out of poets . . . are of two sorts: those with incomes and those without. Among the former are found most of the excellent names in English poetry, a fact which is hardly a compliment to our civilization."

Would that one of those excellent philanthropists who has grown so accustomed to

giving a million to libraries and universities that the act has become slightly mechanical — might realize that he has, with all his generosity, made no provision as yet for helping one of the most indispensable of all educational institutions — the poet. Would that he might realize how little good the poet of genius can derive from the universities — places whose conservative formalism is even dangerous to his originality, because they try to melt him along with all the other students and pour him into their one mold. It is distressing to think of all the sums now devoted to inducing callow, overdriven sophomores to compose forced essays and doggerel, by luring them on with the glitter of cash prizes. One shudders to think of all the fellowship money which is now being used to finance reluctant young dry-as-dusts while they are preparing to pack still tighter the already overcrowded ranks of "professors of English literature" — whose profession, as Gerald Stanley Lee justly remarks, is founded on the

striking principle that a very great book can be taught by a very little man. This is a department of human effort which, as now usually conducted, succeeds in destroying much budding appreciation of poetry. Why endow these would-be interpreters of poetry, to the neglect of the class of artists whose work they profess to interpret? What should we think of England if her Victorian poets had all happened to be penniless, and she had packed them off to Grub Street and invested, instead, in a few more professors of Victorian literature?

Why should not a few thousands out of the millions we spend on education be used to found fellowships of creative poetry? These would not be given at first to those who wish to learn to write poetry; for the first thousands would be far too precious for use in any such wild-cat speculations. They would be devoted, rather, to poets of proved quality, who have already, somehow, learned their art, and who ask no more wondrous boon from

life than fresh air and time to regain and keep that necessary margin of vitality which must go to the making of genuine poetry.

I would not have the incumbent of such a fellowship, however, deprived suddenly of all outer incentives for effort. The abrupt transition from constant worry and war among his members to an absolutely unclouded life of pure vocation-following might be almost too violent a shock, and unsettle him and injure his productivity for a time.

The award of such a fellowship must not, of course, involve the least hint of charity or coercion. It should be offered and accepted as an honor, not as a donation. The yearly income should, in my opinion, be small. It should be such a sum as would almost, but not quite, support the incumbent very simply in the country, and still allow for books and an occasional trip to town. In some cases an income of a thousand dollars, supplemented by the little that poetry earns and possibly by a random article or story in the magazines,

would enable a poet to lead a life of the largest effectiveness.

It is my belief that almost any genuine poet who is now kept in the whirl by economic reasons and thus debarred from the free practice of his calling would gladly relinquish even a large salary and reduce his life to simple terms to gain the inestimable privilege of devoting himself wholly to his art before the golden bowl is broken. Many of those who are in intimate touch with the poets of America to-day could show any philanthropist how to do his land and the world more actual, visible, immediate good by devoting a thousand dollars to poetry, than by allowing an hundred times that sum to slip into the ordinary well-worn grooves of philanthropy.

Some years ago a *questionnaire* was submitted to various literary men by a poetry-lover who hoped to induce a wealthy friend to subsidize poets of promise in case these literary leaders approved the plan. While the younger writers warmly favored the idea, a

few of the older ones discouraged it. These were, in all cases, men who had made a financial success in more lucrative branches of literature than poetry; and it was natural for the veterans, who had brawnily struggled through the burden and heat of the day, to look with the unsympathetic eye of the sturdy upon those frailer ones of the rising generation who perhaps might, without assistance, be eliminated in the rough-and-tumble of the literary market-place. Of course it was but human for the veterans to insist that any real genius among their youthful competitors "would out," and that any assistance would but make life too soft for the youngsters, and go to swell the growing "menace" of bad verse by mitigating the primal rigors of natural selection. No doubt the generation of writers older than Wordsworth quite innocently uttered these very same sentiments in voices of deep authority when it was proposed to offer this young person a chance to compose in peace. No. One fears

that the attitude of these veterans was not wholly judicial. But then, why should any haphazard group of creative artists be expected to be judicial, anyway? One might as reasonably go to the Louvre for classes in conic sections, or to the Garden of the Gods for instruction in Rabbinical theology.

Few supporters of the general plan, on the other hand, were wholly in favor of all the measures proposed for carrying it out. Some of the most telling criticisms went to show that while poets of undoubted ability ought to be helped, the method of their selection offers a grave difficulty. H. G. Wells, who heartily approved the main idea, brought out the fact that it would never do to leave the choice to a jury, as no jury would ever have voted for half of the great poets who have perished miserably. Juries are much too conventionally minded. For they are public functionaries; or, if not that, at least they feel self-consciously as if they were going

to be held publicly responsible, and are apt to bring extremely conventional, and perhaps priggish, standards to bear upon their choice. "They invariably become timid and narrow," wrote Mr. Wells, "and seek refuge in practical, academic, and moral tests that invariably exclude the real men of genius."

Prizes and competitions were considered equally ill-advised methods of selection. It is significant that these methods are now being rapidly dropped in the fields of sculpture and architecture. For the mere thought of a competition is a thing essentially antagonistic to the creative impulse; and talent is likely to acquit itself better than genius in such a struggle. The idea of a poetic competition is a relic of a pioneer mode of thought. Mr. Wells concluded that the decision should be made by the individual. But I cannot agree with him that that same individual should be the donor of the fellowship. It seems to me that this would-be savior of our American poetry should select the best judge of poets

and poetry that he can discover and be guided by his advice.

On general principles, there are several things that this judge should *not* be. He should not be a professor of English, because of the professor's usual bias toward the academic. Besides, these fellowships ought not in any way to be associated with institutions of learning — places which are apt to fetter poets and surround them with an atmosphere hostile to the creative impulse. Neither should this momentous decision be left to editors or publishers, because they are usually suffering from literary indigestion caused by skimming too many manuscripts too fast, and because, at any rate, they ordinarily pay little attention to poetry and hold it commercially "in one grand despise." Nor should the normal type of poet be chosen as judge to decide this question. For the poet is apt to have a narrow, one-sided view of the field. He has probably developed his own distinctive style and personality at the expense of

artistic catholicity and kindly breadth of critical judgment. The creative and the critical faculties are usually as distinct and as mutually exclusive spheres as that of the impassioned, partisan lawyer and the cool, impartial judge.

To whom, then, should the decision be left? It should, in my opinion, be left to a real *judge* — to some broad, keen critic of poetry with a clear, unbiased contemporary view of the whole domain of the art. It matters not whether he is professional or amateur, so he is untouched by academicism and has not done so much reading or writing as to impair his mental digestion and his clarity of vision. Care, of course, would have to be used in safeguarding the critic-judge against undue pressure in favor of this candidate or that; and in safeguarding the incumbent of the fellowship from yet more insidious influences. For the apparently liberated poet would merely have exchanged prisons if he learned that the founder of the fellowship

wished to dictate what sort of poetry he should write.

The idea of poetry fellowships is not as novel as it perhaps may sound. It is no mere empirical theory. Americans ought to be proud to know that, in a modest way, it has recently been tried here, and is proving a success. I am told that already two masters of poetry have been presented to us as free workers in their art by two Boston philanthropists, and have been enabled to accomplish some of their best work through such fellowships as are here advocated. This fact should put cities like New York, Pittsburg, and Chicago on their mettle. For they must realize that Boston, with her quiet, slow-moving, Old-World pace, has not done to poetry a tithe of the harm that her more energetic neighbors have, and should therefore not be suffered to bear the entire brunt of the expiation.

Men say that money cannot buy a joyful heart. But next to writing a great poem, I

can scarcely imagine a greater happiness than to know that a thousand of my dollars had enabled an imprisoned genius to shake from his shoes the dust of a city office and go for a year to "God's outdoors," there to free his system of some of the beauty that had chokingly accumulated there until it had grown an almost intolerable pain. What joy to know that my fellowship had given men the modern New World "Hyperion," or "Prelude," or "Ring and the Book"! And even if that whole year resulted in nothing more than a "Skylark," or a "Rabbi Ben Ezra," or a "Crossing the Bar" — could one possibly consider such a result in the same thought-wave with dollars and cents?

But this thousand dollars might do something even better than help produce counterparts of famous poems created in other times and lands. It might actually secure the inestimable boon of a year's leisure, a procession of peaceful vistas, and a brimming cup for one of that "new brood" of "poets to come"

which Walt Whitman so confidently counted upon to 'justify him and answer what he was for.' This handful of gold might make it possible for one of these new poets to come into his own, and ours, at once, and in his own person accomplish that fusion, so devoutly to be wished, of those diverse factors of the greatest poetry which have existed among us thus far only in awful isolation — the possession of this one and that of our chief singers.

How fervently we poetry-lovers wish that one of the captains of industry would feel impelled to put his hand into his pocket — if only into his watch-pocket — or adorn his last testament with a modest codicil! It would be such poetic justice if one of those who have prospered through the very speeding-up process which has so seriously crippled our poetry, should devote to its service a small tithe of what he has won from poetry's loss — and thus hasten our renaissance of singers, and bring a new dawn, 'brighter than before known,' out of the dusk of the poets.

IX

THE JOYOUS MISSION OF MECHANICAL MUSIC

I WONDER if any other invention has ever, in such a brief time, made so many joyful hearts as the invention of mechanical music. It has brought light, peace, gladness, and the gift of self-expression to every third or fourth flat, villa, and lonely farmhouse in the land. Its voice has literally gone out through all the earth, and with a swiftness more like that of light than of sound.

Only yesterday we were marveling at the discovery of the larger magazine audience. Until then we had never dreamed of addressing millions of fellow creatures at one time, as the popular magazine now does. Imagine the astonished delight of Plato or Cervantes, Poe or Dickens, if they had been given in one week an audience equivalent in number

to five thousand readers a year for ten centuries! Dickens would have called it, I think, "immortality-while-you-wait." Yet this sort of immortality was recently placed at the immediate disposal of the ordinary writer.

The miracle was unique in history. But it did not long remain so. Not content with raining this wonder upon us, history at once poured down a greater. One morning we awoke to find a new and still vaster medium of expression, a medium whose globe-girdling voice was to that of the five-million reader magazine as the roar of Niagara to the roar of a Philadelphia trolley-car. To-day, from wherever civilized man has obtained even a temporary foothold, there arise without ceasing the accents of mechanical music, which talk persuasively to all in a language so universal that even the beasts understand it and cock applauding ears at the sound of the master voice. So that, while the magazine writers now address the million, the composers

and singers and players make their bows to the billion.

Their omnipresence is astonishing. They are the last to bid you farewell when you leave civilization. They are the first to greet you on your return. When I canoed across the wild Allagash country, I was sped from Moosehead Lake by Caruso, received with open arms at the halfway house by the great-hearted Plancon, and welcomed to Fort Kent by Sousa and his merry men. With Schumann-Heinck, Melba, and Tetrazzini I once camped in the heart of the Sierras. When I persisted to the uttermost secret corner of the Dolomites, I found myself anticipated by Kreisler and his fiddle. They tell me that the portly Victor Herbert has even penetrated with his daring orchestra through darkest Africa and gone on to arrange a special benefit, in his home town, for the dalai-lama of Tibet.

One of the most promising things about mechanical music is this: No matter what

kind of music or quality of performance it offers you, you presently long for something a little better — unless your development has been arrested. It makes small difference in this respect which one of the three main varieties of instrument you happen to own. It may be the phonograph. It may be the kind of automatic piano which accurately reproduces the performances of the master pianists. It may be the piano-player which indulgently supplies you with technic ready-made, and allows you to throw your own soul into the music, whether you have ever taken lessons or not. Or it may be a combination of the last two. The influence of these machines is progressive. It stands for evolution rather than for devolution or revolution.

Often, however, the evolution seems to progress by sheer accident. This is the way the accident is likely to happen. Jones is buying records for the family phonograph. One may judge of his particular stage of musical evolution by his purchases, which

are: "Meet me in St. Louis, Louis," "Dance of the Honey Bells," "Hello Central, Give me Heaven," "Fashion Plate March," and "I Know that I'll be Happy when I Die." He also notices in the catalogue a piece called "Tannhäuser March," and, after some hesitation, buys this as well, because the name sounds so much like his favorite brand of beer that he suspects it to be music of a convivial nature — a medley of drinking-songs, perhaps.

But that evening in the parlor it does not seem much like beer. When the Mephisto Military Band strikes it up — far from seeming in the least alcoholic, it exhilarates nobody. So Jones inters it in the darkest corner of the music-cabinet. And the family devote themselves to the cake-walks and comic medleys, the fandangoes and tangos, the xylophone solos, the shakedowns and breakdowns and the rags and tatters of their collection until they have thoroughly exhausted the delights thereof. Then, having had time

to forget somewhat the flatness of "Tannhäuser," and for want of anything better to do, they take out the despised record, dust it, and insert it into the machine. But this time, curiously enough, the thing does not sound quite so flat. After repeated playings, it even begins to rival the "Fashion Plate March" in its appeal. And it keeps on growing in grace until within a year the "Fashion Plate March" is as obsolete as fashion plates have a habit of growing within a year, while "Tannhäuser" has won the distinction of being the best-wearing record in the cabinet.

Then it begins to occur to the Jones family that there must be two kinds of musical food: candy and staples. Candy, like the "Fashion Plate March," tastes wonderfully sweet to the unsophisticated palate as it goes down; but it is easy to take too much. And the cheaper the candy, the swifter the consequent revulsion of feeling. As for the staples, there is nothing very piquant about their flavor; but if they are of first quality, and if one

keeps his appetite healthy, one seems to enjoy them more and more and to thrive on them three times a day.

Accordingly, Jones is commissioned, when next he visits the music-store, to get a few more records like "Tannhäuser." On this occasion, he may even be rash enough to experiment with a Schubert march, or a Weber overture, or one of the more popular movements of a Beethoven sonata. And so the train of evolution will rush onward, bearing the Joneses with it until fashion-plate marches are things of the misty, backward horizon, and the family has, by little and little, come to know and love the whole blessed field of classical music. And they have found that the word "classical" is not a synonym for dry-rot, but that it simply means the music that wears best.

However the glorious mistake may occur, it is being made by someone every hour. By such hooks and crooks as these, good music is finding its way into more and more

homes. Although its true "classical" nature is detected at the first trial, it is not thrown away, because it cost good money. It is put away and bides its time; and some day the surprising fact that it has wearing qualities is bound to be discovered. To those who believe in the law of musical evolution, and who realize that mechanical music has reached the wide world, and is even beginning to penetrate into the public library, the possibility of these happy accidents means a sure and swift general development in the appreciation of the best music.

Those who know that man's musical taste tends to grow better and not worse, know also that *any* music is better than no music. A mechanical instrument which goes is better than a new concert grand piano that remains shut.

"Canned music may not be the highest form of art," the enthusiast will say with a needless air of half apology, half defiance, "but I enjoy it no end." And then he will

go on to tell how the parlor melodeon had gathered dust for years until it was given in part exchange for a piano-player. And now the thing is the joy of the family, and the home is filled with color and effervescence, and every one's head is filled with at least a rudiment of living, growing musical culture.

The fact is, the piano-player is turning thousands of supposedly humdrum, prosaic people into musical enthusiasts, to their own immense surprise. Many of these people are actually taking lessons in the subtle art of manipulating the machine. They are spending more money than they can afford on vast collections of rolls. They are going more and more to every important concert for hints on interpretation. Better still, the most musical among them are being piqued, by the combined merits and defects of the machine, into learning to play an *un*mechanical instrument for the joy of feeling less mechanism interposed between themselves and "the real thing."

Machinery has already done as much for the true spirit of music as the "safe and sane" movement has done for the true spirit of the Fourth of July. Both have shifted the emphasis from brute noise and fireworks to more spiritual considerations. The piano-player has done a great deal to cheapen the glamour of mere technical display on the part of the virtuosi and to redeem us from the thralldom of the school of Liszt. Our admiration for musical gymnastics and tight-rope balancing is now leaking away so fast through the perforations of the paper rolls that the kind of display-piece known as the concerto is going out of fashion. The only sort of concerto destined to keep our favor is, I imagine, that of the Schumann or Brahms type, which depends for its effect not at all on display, but on sound musicianship alone. The virtuoso is destined soon to leave the circus business and bid a long farewell to his late colleagues, the sword-swallower, the trapeze artist, the strong man, the fat lady, the contortionist,

and the gentleman who conducts the shell-and-pea game. For presently the only thing that will be able to entice people to concerts will be the soul of music. Its body will be a perfectly commonplace affair.

Many a good musician fears, I know, that machine-made music will not stop with annihilating vulgar display, but will do to death all professional music as well. This fear is groundless. Mechanical instruments will no more drive the good pianist or violinist or 'cellist out of his profession than the public library, as many once feared, will drive the bookseller out of business. For the library, after persuading people to read, has taught them how much pleasure may be had from owning a book, with the privilege of marking it and scribbling one's own ideas on the margins, and not having to rush it back to headquarters at inopportune moments and pay to a stern young woman a fine of eight cents. Likewise people are eventually led to realize that the joy of passively absorbing

the product of phonograph or electric piano contrasts with the higher joy of listening creatively to music which the hearer helps to make, in the same way that borrowing a book of Browning contrasts with owning a book of Browning. I believe that, just as the libraries are yearly educating hosts of book-buyers, so mechanical music is coöperating with evolution to swell the noble army of those who support concerts and give private musicales.

Of course there is no denying that the existence of music-making machinery has a certain relaxing effect on some of the less talented followers of the muse of strumming, scraping, screeching, and blatting. This is because the soul of music is not in them. And in striving to reproduce its body, they perceive how hopeless it is to compete with the physical perfection of the manufactured product. In like manner, the invention of canned meats doubtless discouraged many minor cooks from further struggles with their craft. But these

losses, I, for one, cannot bring myself to mourn.

What seems a sounder complaint is that the phonograph, because it reproduces with equal readiness music and the spoken word, may become an effective instrument of satire in the hands of the clever philistine. Let me illustrate. To the Jones collection of records, shortly after "Tannhäuser" began to win its way, there was added a reactionary "comic" record entitled "Maggie Clancy's New Piano." In the record Maggie begins playing "Tannhäuser" very creditably on her new instrument. Presently the voice of old Clancy is heard from another room calling, "Maggie!" The music goes on. There is a *crescendo* series of calls. The piano stops.

"Yes, Father?"

"Maggie, is the new pianny broke?"

"No, Father; I was merely playing Wagner."

Old Clancy meditates a moment; then, with a gentleness of touch that might turn a New

York music critic green with envy, he replies: "Oh, I thought ye wuz shovelin' coal in the parlor stove."

Records like these have power to retard and roughen the otherwise smooth course of a family's musical evolution; but they are usually unable to arrest it. In general I think that such satires may fortify the elder generation in its conservative mistrust of classical music. But if they are only heard often enough by the young, I believe that the sympathies of the latter will end in chiming with the taste of the enlightened Maggie rather than with that of her father.

Until recently a graver charge against the phonograph has been that it was so much better adapted for reproducing song than pure instrumental music that it was tending to identify the art of music in the minds of most men with song alone. This tendency was dangerous. For song is not all of music, nor even its most important part. The voice is naturally more limited in range, technic,

and variety of color than many another instrument. And it is artificially handicapped by the rather absurd custom which forces the singer to drag in poetry (much to the latter's disadvantage), and therewith distract his own attention and that of his audience from the music.

The fact remains that one art at a time is none too easy for even the most perfect medium of expression to cope with. To make a somewhat less than perfect instrument like the human voice, cope always with two simultaneously is an indication that the young art of music has not yet emerged from its teens. This is one reason why most song is as yet so intrinsically unmusical. Its reach is, as a rule, forced to exceed its grasp. Also the accident of having a fine voice usually determines a singer's career, though a perfect vocal organ does not necessarily imply a musical nature. The best voices, in fact, often belong, by some contrariety of fate, to the worst musicians. For these and other

reasons, there is less of the true spirit of music to be heard from vocal cords than from the cords and reeds and brazen tubes of piano, organ, string quartet, and orchestra. Thus, when the phonograph threatened to identify song with music in general, it threatened to give the art a setback and make the singer the arch-enemy of the wider musical culture. Fortunately the phonograph now gives promise of averting this peril by bringing up its reproduction of absolute music near to its vocal standard.

Another charge against most machine-made music is its unhuman accuracy. The phonograph companies seldom give out a record which is not practically perfect in technic and intonation. As for the mechanical piano, there is no escape from the certainty of just what notes are coming next — that is, if little Johnnie has not been editing the paper record with his father's leather-punch. Therefore one grows after a while to long for a few of those deviations from mathematical precision

which imply human frailty and lovableness. One reason why the future is veiled from us is that it is so painful to be certain that one's every prediction is coming true.

A worse trouble with the phonograph is that it seems to leave out of account that essential part of every true musical performance, the creative listener. A great many phonograph records sound as though the recorder had been performing to an audience no more spiritually resonant than the four walls of a factory. I think that the makers of another kind of mechanical instrument must have realized this oversight on the part of the phonograph manufacturer. I mean the sort of electric piano which faithfully reproduces every *nuance* of the master pianists. Many of the records of this marvelous instrument sound as though the recording-room of the factory had been "papered" with creative listeners who coöperated mightily with the master on the stage. Would that the phonographers might take the hint!

But no matter how effectively the creative listener originally coöperates with the maker of this kind of record, the electric piano does not appeal as strongly to the creative listener in his home as does the less perfect but more impressionable piano-player, which responds like a cycle to pedal and brake. For the records of the phonograph and of the electric piano, once they are made, are made. Thereafter they are as insensible to influence as the laws of the Medes and Persians. They do not admit the audience to an active, influential part in the performance. But such a part in the performance is exactly what the true listener demands as his democratic right. And rather than be balked of it, he turns to the less sophisticated mechanism of the piano-player. This, at least, responds to his control.

Undeniably, though, even the warmest enthusiasts for the piano-player come in time to realize that their machine has distinct limitations; that it is better suited to certain pieces than to others. They find that music may be

performed on it with the more triumphant success the less human it is and the nearer it comes to the soullessness of an arabesque. The best operator, by pumping or pulling stops or switching levers, cannot entirely succeed in imbuing it with the breath of life. The disquieting fact remains that the more a certain piece demands to be filled with soul, the thinner and more ghost-like it comes forth. The less intimately human the music, the more satisfactorily it emerges. For example, the performer is stirred by the "Tannhäuser March," as rendered by himself, with its flourish of trumpets and its general hurrah-boys. But he is unmoved by the apostrophe to the "Evening Star" from the same opera. For this, in passing through the piano-player, is almost reduced to a frigid astronomical basis. The singer is no longer Scotti or Bispham, but Herschel or Laplace. The operator may pump and switch until he breaks his heart — but if he has any real musical instinct, he will surely grow to feel a sense of lack in this

sort of music. So for the present, while confidently awaiting the invention of an improved piano-player, which shall give equally free expression to every mood and tense of the human spirit — the operator learns to avoid the very soulful things as much as is practicable.

At this stage of his development he usually begins to crave that supreme kind of music which demands a perfect balance of the intellectual, the sensuous, and the emotional. So he goes more often to concerts where such music is given. Saturated with it, he returns to his piano-player and plays the concert all over again. And his imagination is now so full of the emotional side of what he has just heard and is re-hearing, that he easily discounts the obvious shortcomings of the mechanical instrument. This is an excellent way of getting the most from music. One should not, as many do, take it from the piano-player before the concert and then go with its somewhat stereotyped accents so fixed in the mind as to obscure the heart of

the performance. Rather, in preparation, let the score be silently glanced through. Leave wide the doors of the soul for the precious spiritual part of the music to enter in and take possession. After this happens, use mechanical music to renew your memories of the concert, just as you would use a catalogue illustrated with etchings in black and white, to renew your memory of an exhibition of paintings.

The supreme mission of mechanical music is its direct educational mission. By this I mean something more than its educational mission to the many thousands of grown men and women whose latent interest in music it is suddenly awakening. I have in mind the girls and boys of the rising generation. If people can only hear enough good music when they are young, without having it forcibly fed to them, they are almost sure to care for it when they come to years of discretion. The reason why America is not more musical is

that we men and women of to-day did not yesterday, as children, hear enough good music. Our parents probably could not afford it. It was then a luxury, implying expensive concert tickets or an elaborate musical training for someone in the family.

The invention of mechanical instruments ended this state of affairs forever by suddenly making the best music as inexpensive as the worst. There exists no longer any financial reason why most children should not grow up in an atmosphere of the best music. And I believe that so soon as parents learn how to educate their children through the phonograph or the mechanical piano, the world will realize with a start that the invention of these things is doing more for musical culture than the invention of printing did for literary culture.

We must bear in mind, however, that the invention of mechanical instruments has come far earlier in the history of music than the invention of printing came in the history of

literature. Music is the youngest of the fine arts. It is in somewhat the same stage of development to-day that literature was in the time of Homer. It is in the age of oral — and aural — tradition. Most people still take in music through their ears alone. For all that the invention of note-printing means to them as enjoyers of music, they might almost as well be living æons before Gutenberg. Musically speaking, they belong to the Homeric age.

Now the entrance of mechanical music upon the scene is making men depend on their ears more than ever. It is intensifying and speeding up this age of oral tradition. But in so doing, I believe that it is bound to shorten this age also, on the principle that the faster you go the sooner you arrive. Thus, machinery is hastening us toward the time when the person of ordinary culture will no more depend on his ears alone for the enjoyment of music than he now depends on his ears alone for the enjoyment of Shakespeare.

Thanks to machine-made music, the day is coming the sooner when we shall behold, as neighbors in the ordinary bookcase, such pairs of counterparts as Milton and Bach, Beethoven and Shakespeare, Loeffler and Maeterlinck, Byron and Tschaikowsky, Mendelssohn and Longfellow, Nietzsche and Richard Strauss. Browning will stand up cheek by jowl with his one true affinity, Brahms. And the owner will sit by the quiet hearth reading to himself with equal fluency and joy from Schubert and Keats.

X

MASTERS BY PROXY

It is only in a surrounding of personalities that personalities can as such make themselves seen and heard.

HOUSTON STEWART CHAMBERLAIN.

BETWEEN many of my readers and the joyful heart there seems to stand but a single obstacle — their lack of creativeness. They feel that they could live and die happy if only they might become responsible for the creation of something which would remain to bless mankind after they are gone. But as it is, how can they have the joyful heart when they are continually being tortured by regret because God did not make masters of them?

One is sad because he is not a master of poetry. He never sees A, his golden-tongued friend, without a pang very like the envy of a childless man for a happy father. But he

has no suspicion that he is partly responsible for A's poetic excellence. Another thinks her life a mistake because the Master of all good workmen did not make her a sculptor. Yet all the while she is lavishing unawares upon her brother or son or husband the very stuff that art is made of. Others are inconsolable because no fairy wand at their birth destined them for men of original action, for discoverers in science, pianists, statesmen, or actors; for painters, philosophers, inventors, or architects of temples or of religions.

Now my task in this last chapter is a more delightful one than if I were the usual solicitor of fiction, come to inform the poor-but-honest newsboy that he is a royal duke. It is my privilege to comfort many of the comfortless by revealing to them how and why they are — or may be — masters of an art as indispensable as the arts which they now regard so wistfully. I mean the art of master-making — the art of being a master by proxy.

To be specific, let us single out one of the

arts and see what it means to master it by proxy. Suppose we consider the simple case of executive music. In a book called "The Musical Amateur" I have tried to prove (more fully than is here possible) that the reproduction of music is a social act. It needs two: one to perform, one to appreciate. Both are almost equally essential to a good performance. The man who appreciates a musical phrase unconsciously imitates it with almost imperceptible contractions of throat or lips. These contractions represent an incipient singing or whistling. Motions similar to these, and probably more fully developed, are made at the same time by his mind and his spirit. The whole man actually feels his way, physically and psychically, into the heart of the music. He is turned into a sentient sounding-board which adds its own contribution of emotion to the music and sends it back by wireless telegraphy to the performer. When a violinist and a listener of the right sort meet for musical purposes, this is what

happens. The violinist happens to be in the mood for playing. This means that he has feelings which demand expression. These his bow releases. The music strikes the listener, sets him in vibration as if he were a sounding-board, and rouses in him feelings similar to those of the violinist. Enriched by this new contribution, the emotional complex resounds back to the violinist, intensifying his original "feeling-state." In its heightened form it then recoils back to the appreciator, "and so on, back and forth, growing in stimulating power at each recoil. The whole process is something like a hot 'rally' in tennis, with the opponents closing in on each other and the ball shuttling across the net faster with every stroke as the point gains in excitement and pleasure. 'Social resonance' might be a good way of describing the thing." This, briefly told, is what passes between the player of music and his creative listener.

In application this principle does not by any means stop with performing or composing

music or with the fine arts. It goes on to embrace more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in the fiddler's or in any other artist's philosophy. Perhaps it is not too much to say that no great passion or action has ever had itself adequately expressed without the coöperation of this social resonance, without the help of at least one of those modest, unrecognized partners of genius, the social resonators, the masters by proxy.

Thanks, dear master-makers unawares! The gratitude of the few who understand you is no less sincere because you do not yet realize your own thankworthiness. Our children shall rise up and call you blessed. For in your quiet way, you have helped to create the world's creators — the preachers, prophets, captains, artists, discoverers, and seers of the ages. To these, you, unrecognized and unawares, have been providing the very sinews of peace, vision, war, beauty, originality, and insight.

What made the game of art so brilliant in

the age of Pericles? It was not star playing by individuals. It was steady, consistent team-work by the many. Almost every one of the Athenians who were not masters were masters by proxy. In "The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century" Chamberlain holds that Greek culture derived its incomparable charm from "a peculiar harmony of greatness"; and that "if our poets are not in every respect equal to the greatest poets of Athens, that is not the fault of their talent, but of those who surround them." Only imagine the joyful ease of being a poet in the Periclean atmosphere! It must have been as exhilarating as coasting down into the Yosemite Valley with John Muir on an avalanche of snow.

But even in that enlightened age the master received all the credit for every achievement, and his creative appreciator none at all. And so it has been ever since that particular amœba which was destined for manhood had a purse made up for him and was helped upon

the train of evolution by his less fortunate and more self-effacing friends who were destined to remain amœbæ; because the master by proxy is such a retiring, unspectacular sort of person that he has never caught the popular imagination or found any one to sing his praises. But if he should ever resent this neglect and go on strike, we should realize that without him progress is impossible. For the real lords of creation are not always the apparent lords. We should bear in mind that the most important part of many a throne is not the red velvet seat, the back of cloth of gold, or the onyx arms that so sumptuously accommodate the awe and majesty of acknowledged kings. Neither is it the seed-pearl canopy that intercepts a too searching light from majesty's complexion. It is a certain little filigreed hole in the throne-back which falls conveniently close to the sovereign's ear when he leans back between the periods of the wise, beauteous, and thrilling address to his subjects.

For doubled up in a dark, close box behind the chair of state is a humble, drab individual who, from time to time, applies his mouth to the wrong side of the filigreed hole and whispers things. If he were visible at all, he would look like the absurd prompter under the hood at the opera. He is not a famous person. Most people are so ignorant of his very existence that he might be pardoned for being an agnostic about it himself. The few others know little and care less. Only two or three of the royal family are aware of his name and real function. They refer to him as M. Power-Behind-the-Throne, Master-by-Proxy of State.

There is one sign by which masters by proxy may be detected wherever met. They are people whose presence is instantly invigorating. Before you can make out the color of their eyes you begin to feel that you are greater than you know. It is as if they wore diffused about them auras so extensive and powerful that entering these auras was equivalent to

giving your soul electric massage. You do not have to touch the hem of their garments nor even see them. The auras penetrate a brick wall as a razor penetrates Swiss cheese, And if you are fortunate enough to be on the other side of the partition, you become aware with a thrill that "virtue," in the beautiful, Biblical sense of the word, has gone out of somebody and into you.

If ever I return to live in a city apartment (which may the gods forfend!) I shall this time select the apartment with almost sole reference to what comes through the walls. I shall enter one of those typical New York piles which O. Henry described as "paved with Parian marble in the entrance-hall, and cobblestones above the first floor," and my inquiry will be focused on things far other than Parian marble and cobblestones. I shall walk about the rooms and up and down the bowling-alleys of halls trying to make myself as sensitive to impressions as are the arms of the divining-rod man during his solemn

parade with the wand of witch-hazel. And when I feel "virtue" from the next apartment streaming through the partition, there will I instantly give battle to the agent and take up my abode. And this though it be up six flights of cobblestones, without elevator, without closet-room, with a paranoiac for janitor, and radiators whose musical performance all the day long would make a Cleveland boiler factory pale with envy. For none of these things would begin to offset the privilege of living beside a red-letter wall whose influence should be as benignly constructive as Richard Washburn Child's "Blue Wall" was malignly destructive.

To-day I should undoubtedly be much more of a person if I had once had the pleasure of living a wall away from Richard Watson Gilder. He was a true master by proxy. For he was a vastly more creative person than his published writings will ever accredit him with being. Not only with his pen, but also with his whole self he went about doing

good. "Virtue" fairly streamed from him all the time. Those bowed shoulders and deep-set, kindly eyes would emerge from the inner sanctum of the "Century" office. In three short sentences he would reject the story which had cost you two years of labor and travail. But all the time the fatal words were getting themselves uttered, so much "virtue" was passing from him into you that you would turn from his presence exhilarated, uplifted, and while treading higher levels for the next week, would produce a check-bearing tale. The check, however, would not bring you a tithe of the "virtue" that the great editor's personal rebuff had brought.

But more than to any editor, writers look to their readers for support, especially to their unknown correspondents — postal and psychic. Leonard Merrick has so finely expressed the attitude of many writers that I cannot forbear giving his words to his "public":

I have thought of you so often and wanted to win a smile from you; you don't realize how I have longed to meet you — to listen to you, to have you lift the veil that hides your mind from me. Sometimes in a crowd I have fancied I caught a glimpse of you; I can't explain — the poise of the head, a look in the eyes, there was something that hinted it was You. And in a whirlwind of an instant it almost seemed that you would recognize me; but you said no word — you passed, a secret from me still. To yourself where you are sitting you are just a charming woman with "a local habitation and a name"; but to me you are not Miss or Madam, not M. or N. — you are a Power, and I have sought you by a name you have not heard — you are my Public. And O my Lady, I am speaking to you! I feel your presence in my senses, though you are far away and I can't hear your answer. . . . It is as if I had touched your hand across the page.

There are probably more masters by proxy to be found among the world's mothers than in any other class. The profession of motherhood is such a creative one, and demands so constant an outgo of unselfish sympathy, that a mother's technic as silent partner is usually kept in a highly efficient state. And occa-

sionally a mother of a genius deserves as much credit for him spiritually as physically. Think of Frau Goethe, for example.

Many a genius attains a commanding position largely through the happy chance of meeting many powerful masters by proxy and through his happy facility for taking and using whatever creativeness these have to offer. Genius has been short-sightedly defined as "an infinite capacity for taking pains." Galton more truthfully holds that the triune factors of genius are industry, enthusiasm, and ability. Now if we were to insist, as so many do, on making a definition out of a single one of these factors to the neglect of the others, we should come perhaps nearer the mark by saying that genius is an infinite capacity for taking others' pains. But all such definings are absurd. For the genius absorbs and alchemizes not only the industry of his silent partners, but also their ability and enthusiasm. Their enthusiasm is fortunately contained in a receptacle as generous as Philemon's famous

pitcher. And the harder the genius tries to pour it empty, the more the sparkling liquid bubbles up inside. The transaction is like "the quality of mercy" —

"It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

The ability to receive as well as give this sort of help varies widely with the individual. Some geniuses of large psychic power are able instantly to seize out of any crowd whatever creativeness there is in it. These persons are spiritual giants. Their strength is as the strength of ten because their grasp is sure. They are such stuff as Shakespeares are made of.

Others are not psychically gifted. They can absorb creativeness only from their nearest and dearest, in the most favoring environment, and only after the current has been seriously depleted by wastage in transmission. But these are the two extremes. They are as rare as extremes usually are.

In general I believe that genius, though normally capable of drawing creativeness from

a number of different sources, has as a rule depended largely on the collaboration of one chief master by proxy. This idea gazes wide-eyed down a fascinating vista of speculation. Who, for instance, was Lincoln's silent partner? the power behind the throne of Charlemagne? Buddha's better self? Who were the secret commanders of Grant, Wellington, and Cæsar? Who was Molière's hidden prompter? the conductor of the orchestra called Beethoven? the psychic comrade of Columbus?

I do not know. For history has never commemorated, as such, the masters by proxy with honor due, or indeed with any honor or remembrance at all. It will take centuries to explore the past with the sympathetic eye and the understanding heart in order to discover what great tombs we have most flagrantly neglected.

Already we can single out a few of them. The time is coming when music-lovers will never make a pilgrimage to the resting-place of Wagner without making another to the

grave of Mathilde Wesendonk, whose "virtue" breathed into "Tristan and Isolde" the breath of life. We shall not much longer neglect the tomb of Charles Darwin's father, who, by making the evolutionist financially independent, gave his services to the world. Nor shall we disregard the memory of that other Charles-Darwin-by-proxy — his wife. For her tireless comradeship and devotion and freely lavished vitality were an indispensable reservoir of strength to the great invalid. Without it the world would never have had the "Origin of Species" or the "Descent of Man."

Other instances throng to mind. I have small doubt that Charles Eliot Norton was the silent partner of Carlyle, Ruskin, and Lowell; Ste. Clare of Francis of Assisi; Joachim and Billroth of Brahms, and Dorothy Wordsworth of William. By a pleasant coincidence, I had no sooner noted down the last of these names than I came upon this sentence in Sarah Orne Jewett's Letters: "How much

that we call Wordsworth himself was Dorothy to begin with." And soon after, I found these words in a letter which Brahms sent Joachim with the score of his second "Serenade": "Care for the piece a little, dear friend; it is very much yours and sounds of you. Whence comes it, anyway, that music sounds so friendly, if it is not the doing of the one or two people whom one loves as I love you?" The impressionable Charles Lamb must have had many such partners besides his sister Mary. Hazlitt wrote: "He is one of those of whom it may be said, 'Tell me your company, and I'll tell you your manners.' He is the creature of sympathy, and makes good whatever opinion you seem to entertain of him."

Perhaps the most creative master by proxy I have ever known was the wife of one of our ex-Presidents. To call upon her was to experience the elevation and mental unlimbering of three or four glasses of champagne, with none of that liquid's less desirable after-effects.

I should not wonder if her eminent husband's success were not due as much to her creativeness as to his own.

It sometimes happens that the most potent masters in their own right are also the most potent masters by proxy. They grind out more power than they can consume in their own particular mill-of-the-gods. I am inclined to think that Sir Humphry Davy was one of these. He was the discoverer of chlorine and laughing-gas, and the inventor of the miner's safety lamp. He was also the *deus ex machina* who rescued Faraday from the bookbinder's bench, made him the companion of his travels, and incidentally poured out the overplus of his own creative energy upon the youth who has recently been called "perhaps the most remarkable discoverer of the nineteenth century." Schiller was another of these. "In more senses than one your sympathy is fruitful," wrote Goethe to him during the composition of "Faust."

Indeed, the greatest Master known to

history was first and foremost a master by proxy. It was He who declared that we all are "members one of another." Writing nothing Himself, He inspired others to write thousands of immortal books. He was unskilled as painter, or sculptor, or architect; yet the greatest canvases, marbles, and cathedrals since He trod the earth have sprung directly from his influence. He was no musician.

"His song was only living aloud."

But that silent song was the direct inspiration of much of the sublimest music of the centuries to come. And so we might go on and on about this Master of all vicarious masters.

Yet it is a strange and touching thing to note that even his exuberant creativeness sometimes needed the refreshment of silent partners. When He was at last to perform a great action in his own right He looked about for support and found a master by proxy in Mary, the sister of the practical Martha.

But when He turned for help in uttermost need to his best-beloved disciples He found them only negative, destructive influences. This accounts for the anguish of his reproach: "Could ye not watch with me one hour?"

Having never been properly recognized as such, the world's masters by proxy have never yet been suitably rewarded. Now the world is convinced that its acknowledged masters deserve more of a feast at life's surprise party than they can bring along for themselves in their own baskets. So the world bows them to the places of honor at the banquet board. True, the invitation sometimes comes so late that the master has long since devoured everything in his basket and is dead of starvation. But that makes not the slightest difference to humanity, which will take no refusal, and props the cynically amused skeleton up at the board next the toastmaster. My point is, however, that humanity is often forehanded enough with

its invitations to give the masters a charming time of it before they, too, into the dust descend, *sans* wine, *sans* song, etc. But I do not know that it has ever yet consciously bidden a master by proxy — as such — to the feast. And I contend that if a man's deserts are to be measured at all by his creativeness, then the great masters by proxy deserve seats well up above the salt.

For is it any less praiseworthy to make a master than to make a masterpiece? I grant that the masterpiece is the more sudden and dramatic in appearing and can be made immediate use of, whereas the master is slowly formed, and even then turns out unsatisfactory in many ways. He is apt to be that well-known and inconvenient sort of person who, when he comes in out of the rain to dress for his wedding, abstractedly prepares to retire instead, and then, still more abstractedly, puts his umbrella to bed and stands himself in the corner. All the same, it is no less divine to create a master by slow, laborious methods

than to snatch a masterpiece apparently out of nothing-at-all. In the eye of the evolutionist, man is not of any the less value because he was made by painful degrees instead of having been produced, a perfect gentleman, out of the void somewhat as the magician brings forth from the empty saucepan an omelette, containing a live pigeon with the loaned wedding-ring in its beak.

The master-makers have long been expending their share of the power. It is high time they were enjoying their share of the glory. What an unconscionable leveling up and down there will presently be when it dawns upon humanity what a large though inglorious share it has been having in the spiritually creative work of the world! In that day the seats of the mighty individualists of science, industry, politics, and discovery; of religion and its ancient foe ecclesiasticism; of economy, the arts and philosophy, will all be taken down a peg by the same knowledge that shall exalt "them of low degree."

I can imagine how angrily ruffled the sallow shade of Arthur Schopenhauer will become at the dawn of this spiritual Commune. When the first full notes of the soul's "Marseillaise" burst upon his irritable eardrums, I can hear above them his savage snarl. I can see his malignant expression as he is forced to divide his unearned increment of fame with some of those *Mitmenschen* whom he, like a bad Samaritan, loved to lash with his tongue before pouring in oil of vitriol and the sour wine of sadness. And how like red-ragged turkey-cocks Lord Byron and Nietzsche and Napoleon will puff out when required to stand and deliver some of their precious credit!

There will be compensations, though, to the genius who, safely dead, feels himself suddenly despoiled of a fullness of fame which he had counted on enjoying *in sæcula sæculorum*. When he comes to balance things up, perhaps he will not, after all, find the net loss so serious. Though he lose some credit for his successes, he will also lose some discredit

for his failures. Humanity will recognize that while the good angels of genius are the masters by proxy, the bad angels of genius exert an influence as negative and destructive as the influence of the others is positive and constructive.

How jolly it will be, for all but the bad angels, when we can assign to them such failures as Browning's "The Inn Album"; Davy's contention that iodine was not an element, and Luther's savage hounding of the nobles upon the wretched peasants who had risen in revolt under his own inspiration. But enough of the bad angels! Let us inter them with this epitaph: "They did their worst; devils could do no more."

Turn we to the bright side of the situation. How delighted Keats will be when at last the world develops a little sense of proportion, and after first neglecting and then over-praising him, finally proposes to give poor old Severn his due as a master by proxy. Imagine Sir William Herschel's pleasure when his be-

loved sister Caroline begins to receive her full deserts. And Tschaikowsky will slough his morbidness and improvise a Slavic Hallelujah Chorus when his unseen patroness comes into her own. It is true that the world has already given her memory two fingers and a perfunctory "thank ye." This was for putting her purse at Tschaikowsky's disposal, thus making it possible for him to write a few immortal compositions instead of teaching mortals the piano in a maddening conservatory. But now, glory! hallelujah! the world is soon going to render her honor long overdue for the spiritual support which so ably reinforced the financial.

And Sir Thomas More, that early socialist — imagine his elation! For he will regard our desire to transfer some of his own credit to the man in the pre-Elizabethan street as a sure sign that we are steadily approaching the golden gates of his Utopia. For good Sir Thomas knows that our view of heroes and hero-worship has always been too little demo-

cratic. We have been over-inclined, with the aristocratic Carlyle, to see all history as a procession of a few transcendent masters surrounded, preceded, and followed by enormous herds of abject and quite insignificant slaves. Between these slaves and the masters, there is, in the old view, about as much similarity as exists in the child's imagination between the overwhelming dose of castor oil and the single pluperfect chocolate drop whereby the dose is supposed to be made endurable. Already the idea is beginning to glimmer that heroic stuff is far more evenly distributed throughout the throng than we had supposed.

It is, of course, very meet and very right and our bounden duty to admire the world's standard, official heroes. But it is wrong to revere them to the exclusion of folk less showy but perhaps no less essential. It is almost as wrong as it would be for the judges at the horse-show to put the dog-cart before the horse and then focus their admiring glances so exclusively upon the vehicle that they for-

got the very existence of its patient and unself-conscious propeller.

It is especially fitting that we should awake to the worth of the master by proxy just now, when the movement for the socialization of the world, after so many ineffectual centuries, is beginning to engage the serious attention of mankind. Thus far, one of the chief reactionary arguments against all men being free has been that men are so shockingly unequal. And the reactionaries have called us to witness the gulf that yawns, for example, between the god-like individualist, Ysaye, and the worm-like little factory girl down there in the audience balanced on the edge of the seat and listening to the violin — her rapt soul sitting in her eyes. Now, however, we know that, but for the wireless tribute of creativeness that flashes up to the monarch of tone from that "rapt soul" and others as humble and as rapt — the king of fiddlers would then and there be obliged to lay down his horsehair scepter and abdicate.

We have reached a stage of social evolution where it is high time that one foolish old fallacy should share the fate of the now partially discredited belief that "genius will out" in spite of man or devil. This fallacy is the supposition that man's creativeness is to be measured solely by its visible, audible, or tangible results. Browning's old Rabbi made a shrewd commentary on this question when he declared:

"Not on the vulgar mass
Called 'work,' must sentence pass,
Things done that took the eye and had the price. . .
But all the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb. . . .
Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped:
All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

Yes, we are being slowly socialized, even to our way of regarding genius; and this has been until now the last unchallenged strong-

hold of individualism. We perceive that even there individualism must no longer be allowed to have it all its own way. After a century we are beginning to realize that the truth was in our first socially minded English poet when he sang:

> "Nothing in the world is single,
> All things by a law divine
> In one another's being mingle."

To-day we have in library, museum, gallery, and cathedral tangible records of the creativeness of the world's masters. Soon I think we are to possess — thanks to Edison and the cinematographers — intangible records — or at least suggestions — of the modest creativeness of our masters by proxy. Some day every son with this inspiring sort of mother will have as complete means as science and his purse affords, of perpetuating her voice, her changing look, her walk, her tender smile. Thus he may keep at least a gleam of her essential creativeness always at hand for help in the hour of need.

I would give almost anything if I could have in a storage battery beside me now some of the electric current that was forever flowing out of my own mother, or out of Richard Watson Gilder, or out of Hayd Sampson, a glorious old "inglorious Milton" of a master by proxy whom I once found toiling in a small livery-stable in Minnesota. My faith is firm that some such miracle will one day be performed. And in our irreverent, Yankee way we may perhaps call the captured product of the master by proxy — "canned virtue." In that event the twenty-first centurion will no more think of setting out on a difficult task or for a God-forsaken environment without a supply of "canned virtue" than of starting for one of the poles equipped with only a pocketful of pemmican.

There is a grievous amount of latent master-making talent spoiling to-day for want of development. Many an one feels creative energy crying aloud within himself for vicarious spiritual expression. He would be a

master by proxy, yet is at a loss how to learn. Him I would recommend to try learning the easiest form of the art. Let him resolve to become a creative listener to music. Once he is able to influence reproducers of art like pianists and singers, he can then begin groping by analogy toward the more difficult art of influencing directly the world's creators. But even if he finds himself quite lacking in creativeness, he can still be a silent partner of genius if he will relax purse-strings, or cause them to be relaxed, for the founding of creative fellowships.

I do not know if ever yet in the history of the planet the mighty force which resides in the masters by proxy has been systematically used. I am sure it has never been systematically conserved, and that it is one of the least understood and least developed of earth's natural resources. One of our next long steps forward should be along this line of the conservation of "virtue." The last physical frontier has practically been passed. Now let

us turn to the undiscovered continents of soul which have so long been awaiting their Columbuses and Daniel Boones, their country-life commissions and conferences of governors.

When the hundredth part of you possible masters by proxy shall grow aware of your possibilities, and take your light from under the bushel, and use it to reinforce the flickering flame of talent at your elbow, or to illumine the path of some unfortunate and stumbling genius, or to heighten the brilliance of the consummate master — our civilization will take a mighty step towards God.

Try it, my masters!

THE END

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